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**BROOKLYN HTS-CGARDENS-DTOWN-FT GREENE-WMSBRG**

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The proposed "Mr. Brooklyn" tower could rise 1,000 feet.

## Ratner's 'Mr Brooklyn' deal gets sweeter

By Adam F. Hutton  
The Brooklyn Paper

City University is offering to sweeten its deal with developer Bruce Ratner, The Brooklyn Paper has learned.

Last month, CUNY's Board of Trustees voted to pay Ratner \$307 million to build a new 11- to 14-story laboratory and classroom building for City Tech in Downtown Brooklyn — a whopping \$221 million more than the \$86 million the university system originally offered the developer in 2004.

The request for additional cash will be taken up by the state legis-

lature next month.

In addition to the fee for constructing the new college building, Ratner would also get control of a lucrative site on the southeast corner of Jay and Tillary streets — a Downtown plot where he is reportedly planning the city's tallest residential tower, the so-called "Mr. Brooklyn."

CUNY selected Ratner's development company to build the 335,000-square-foot building in 2005. Since then, the university and Forest City Ratner have been in negotiations that led to last month's proposal to increase Ratner's take.

A CUNY spokesman said that the university's request for more money from the state does not seal the deal. What Ratner will eventually be paid for his construction services will not be finalized until more negotiations between CUNY and the developer are concluded, he said.

But at this point, negotiations have been going in Ratner's favor. CUNY's original 2004 request for proposals promised the winning developer \$86 million to build the City Tech lab on the southeast corner of Jay and Tillary streets, plus 1 million square feet in development rights.

The cost of the building has

swelled to more than \$300 million — and in addition to the extra cash, CUNY will eventually enhance Ratner's "Mr. Brooklyn" project by building a park on Tillary Street between Jay and Bridge streets.

With his development rights, Ratner is reportedly planning a 700- to 1,000-foot residential behemoth designed by Renzo Piano, the same architect behind his well-received Times Tower in Manhattan.

Mr. Brooklyn would include 600 market-rate apartments and serve as a shimmering new corridor into Ratner's Metrotech Center, an office complex that covers 10-block swath of Downtown.



City Tech's Kligford Auditorium, would be replaced by a new tower built by developer Bruce Ratner.

# STEAK AND PANCAKE TOWN!

## National chains eating up space Downtown

### IHOP opens on Livingston

By Adam F. Hutton  
The Brooklyn Paper

Brooklynites came from near and far to gorge on piping hot buttermilk pancakes, sausage, hash browns, eggs and every other conceivable type of breakfast fare on Tuesday as the International House of Pancakes opened its first Downtown location, beneath the municipal parking garage at Livingston and Bond streets.

"Of course, I ordered pancakes," said Lindsay Vazquez, who came all the way from Williamsburg for the famous flapjacks. "I usually get the Rooty Tooty Fresh 'N' Fruity with blueberries, but they've got something new here called the 'Steakhouse Combo' that comes with two pancakes, two pieces of sausage, two eggs and hash browns and I had to try it."

Built into a parking garage, this IHOP bears little resemblance to the roadside comfort food stations throughout the rest of America.

As such, many diners didn't know what to expect in hard-to-find Brooklyn.

"The last time I ate at an IHOP was on some lonesome highway in middle America," said Jordan Langley of Midwood. "It's kind of weird to find one in the city."

Langley's only complaint about his breakfast was the price.

"Seven dollars for eggs and toast is a lot of money, but I don't hold it against them because the rent here has got to be a lot higher than it is along some high-way in the Midwest."

There are two other IHOPs in the borough — one in Flatbush and one in Canarsie. But Dave Cox and Robert Cummins, the Brooklyn-bred duo that own the Downtown franchise, knew they had to bring one to the heart of Brooklyn.

"We're loyal IHOP customers from way back," said Cummins, who achieved fame in an entirely different realm, as the rap impresario who "discovered" Mary J. Blige and others. See **IHOP** on page 5



At the grand opening of the International House of Pancakes on Livingston Street on Tuesday, Orion Raz Roven enjoyed a smiling pancake.

### Morton's anchors Adams mall

By Gersh Kuntzman  
The Brooklyn Paper

Downtown Brooklyn is licking its chops over a plan to bring the upscale Morton's steakhouse to the Brooklyn Marriott next year, setting the stage for a commercial explosion of along the heavily trafficked auto approach to the Brooklyn Bridge which, until now, has been devoid of retail establishments.

The 300-seat restaurant will open in the ground floor of the Marriott's new annex tower on Adams Street by the end of 2008, said Joshua Moss, the hotel's developer, who has also inked a lease for 40,000 square feet of unused retail space in an adjacent former courthouse.

"Morton's will ... serve as a model of what types of retailers can thrive at the newly created Adams Street retail corridor," said Moss, president of Moss Development.

For its part, Morton's announcement barely touched on the red-hot fight between the Chicago-based steakhouse chain and Peter Luger, choosing to emphasize the retail strip over the strip steak.

"Morton's has identified an outstanding location in the heart of Downtown Brooklyn in one of the city's most popular hotels," said Morton's Restaurant Group Chairman Thomas J. Baldwin.

The Morton's announcement is the first since Downtown Brooklyn Partnership President Joe Chan told The Brooklyn Paper in October that he was intent on turning unused municipal spaces — including the former courthouse and the ground floor of the Municipal Building — into retail space.

Since then, real-estate insiders have drooled with the possibilities of luring a Nordstrom or the borough's first Apple store to Downtown — whose population is expected to surge with 30,000 new residents and 1.6 million square feet of office space in a series of towers that are already under construction along Flatbush Avenue Extension.

The smart money is on Peter Luger. But the stomach is on Morton's. Look, Peter Luger has ranked as the city's best steakhouse — at least according to Mr. Zagat — for the past 24 years. In the last Zagat Survey, Luger's received a 28-out-of-30



A rendering of the proposed Morton's steakhouse on Adams Street Downtown — including a jawwalker!

## BEEF BATTLE BEGINS

### Peter Luger faces meaty competition

**THE BROOKLYN ANGLE** By Gersh Kuntzman

**T**he Battle of Brooklyn Beef has finally been joined. The new Morton's steakhouse in the Brooklyn Marriott — which will open in late 2008 — is aiming to take a bite out of Peter Luger, the Williamsburg steakhouse that has enjoyed a virtual monopoly on the flesh-trade since it opened in 1887.

The smart money is on Peter Luger. But the stomach is on Morton's. Look, Peter Luger has ranked as the city's best steakhouse — at least according to Mr. Zagat — for the past 24 years. In the last Zagat Survey, Luger's received a 28-out-of-30

score, with reviewers touting its "matchless marbled beef" and "juicy perfection." I wonder when those reviewers last made the trek to South Williamsburg. Indeed, this reporter (who is fourth in annual beef consumption behind the United States, Argentina and Australia) found the once-legendary

See **MORTON'S** on page 5



## Sparks fly in Coney Island

Mayor Bloomberg may be angling to buy out Coney Island landowner Joe Sitt, but the folks at Deno's Wonder Wheel are focused on opening day, March 23, 2008. Here, employee Jorge Gallegos repairs one of the landmark ferris wheel's enclosed carriages.

## Thieves going for the gold — copper

By Adam F. Hutton  
The Brooklyn Paper

Copper is the new gold for Brooklyn's criminals.

At least four heists of the once-cheap electrical conductor have been pulled off in Brownstone Brooklyn since June, and a few others were foiled when the cops caught the bad guys red handed before they could make off with their ill-gotten orange gold.

It's no wonder copper is attracting thieves. Stolen pipes and wiring can be sold to scrap metal dealers for \$3-\$4 per pound — and compared to other valuables, it's relatively easy to haul it away from unguarded construction sites and abandoned buildings.

"You can find it at any construction site," said Jim, a plumber who was unloading copper pipes at the Oro Condo tower at 306 Gold St. in Downtown Brooklyn on Monday afternoon. The plumber, who asked that his last name not be used, said workers at the Oro site now know better than to leave anything where thieves might be tempted to walk off with it.

"Nothing gets left out unguarded, not even a



These days, a handful of copper is worth its weight in gold — if a rash of recent copper robberies is any indication.

screw," the hardhat said. A few blocks from the Oro, Dennis Wise guarded a construction site at the corner of Flatbush Avenue and Wiloughby Street, where a demolition crew tore down a parking garage. He said he's ready for anything.

"If someone tries to steal from this site, they have to go through me, and that's not going to happen," he said. Wise said would-be thieves have offered him bribes to look the other way while they rip off the construction sites he's guarding.

"These people come and offer me a few hundred bucks to risk my job so they can get some copper," Wise said. "But I'm smarter than that. My job is worth more than a few hundred dollars."

Law enforcement is getting into the act, with local precinct commanders assigning cops to prevent copper capers before they happen. Police Officer Thomas Brown of the 90th Precinct in Williamsburg regular visits construction sites to remind workers to lock up their copper pipes and wire every night.

See **COPPER** on page 5

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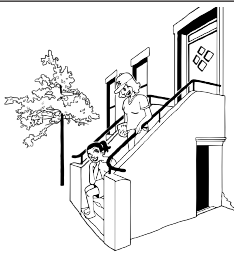
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# THE STOOP

## NEIGHBORHOOD REPORT

### Brooklyn's rat killer fights on

**H**ow bad are the rats in Brooklyn Heights? Some residents are hitting the streets, and taking matters into their own hands. One man — call him The Rat Hunter — is even resorting to violence!

"I've used an air gun with pellets to hit them," said The Rat Hunter, who refused to be named for fear of legal repercussions (it is illegal to torture animals, even ones that not even a mother could love). "There are so many of them, it's like urban hunting."

#### HEIGHTS LOWDOWN



Juliana Bunim

The Rat Hunter also confessed to flushing out a rat tunnel with a water hose. Might not sound too inhumane, except when the rats emerged in search of dry ground.

"I was hacking them to pieces with a machete in a public garden," he said with a smirk. "But we never had a rat problem again."

Many long-standing locals attribute the rodent population surge to the \$2.5-million Promenade renovation in 2001.

The construction "disturbed the nests and drove them toward the buildings," said Charlie Anderson, a Brooklyn Heights doorman of 14 years. "It was then that I began to notice them. It took about 18 months for our building alone to get them under control with snap traps and bait boxes."

While buildings successfully waged individual wars against infestation, the rats moved to more fruitful terrain — public parks and garbage cans.

"Suddenly the rats realized that the only garbage bags still sitting on the ground are those in the city trashcans," said Quintana. "The residents have been wised up, but it doesn't mean much if the city doesn't follow."

The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene has been spreading poison. Several trees on Columbia Heights, as well as in Cadman Plaza Park, are now marked with signs stating that poison is in the area and recommending that dogs (and children) be kept away.

The vague markers on the north end of Columbia Heights in the fruit streets sitting area are taped to four of six trees. There is no explanation of whether the poison was applied to only those trees, or if the signs are meant to indicate there's poison in the entire neighborhood.

It's impossible to decipher the answer just from looking. And considering the DOH didn't return my calls, it seems I'm not going to find the answer there either.

"Those signs are just the city's way of covering its a-- if your dog eats rat poison," said Jeanine Croix, who was visiting the Hillside Dog Park across the street from the signs. "It's totally haphazard."

Whether or not the city has a plan beyond throwing down some poison and up some signs, for now these plague purveyors have some serious verve.

"The rats are getting more brave every year," said Javier Quintana, a nine-year resident. "I've seen some of the size of small dogs cruising down the Promenade. But now they're emerging before dusk. When they're hungry, they're hungry."

The Brooklyn Heights rats are currently living large. While the city should install bigger, more enclosed trash cans, residents and visitors alike need to do all they can to deny these midnight marauders of a food source.

Until then, "the rats are still dancing in the street," said Anderson. "Every night I see them checking out garbage."

In 2001, "No one wanted to talk about it," he said. "We didn't know everyone had the same problem."

This time around, no one is keeping quiet.

"We're seeing domesticated dogs going after them in broad daylight," said Sasha Freeman, who frequently takes her Labrador retriever to Cadman Plaza Park.

"At that point, someone's gotta acknowledge that we have a problem."

Here's the problem as far as I'm concerned: There's only one Rat Hunter in the neighborhood!

Juliana Bunim is a writer who lives in Brooklyn Heights.

#### THE KITCHEN SINK

Things are about to get safer at Brooklyn's only YWCA, on Third Avenue at State Street. The YWCA will install a much-needed sprinkler system with \$50,000 in state funding obtained by **Assemblywoman Joan Millman** (D-Cobble Hill). Ever feel like the MTA is bullying subway riders around with fare hikes and service disruptions? **Councilman Bill DeBlasio** (D-Carroll Gardens) is trying to reign in the runaway agency with a strapanglers' Bill of Rights that includes the rights to regular service, clean stations and comprehensible public announcements. ... **Icon** has cut some of the piers off from the mainland at its Red Hook site, but they are not being destroyed. Instead, the archipelago of piers will stay out to sea as places to store barges. ... A hearty sign welcome to new Brooklyn Heights residents — and former Bill Clinton speechwriter — **Mark Kutz**. ... Run into state **Sen. Marty Connor** (D-Brooklyn Heights) at **David Wolenten's** Christmas party at **St. Ann's Warehouse**. Man, that senator loves his Brussels sprouts. See? We always said he was a great example for the kids. ... We hear that our Daifield Street pal **Joy Chetel**, who just got the city to back off from condemning her home, sold her lucrative air rights. That's good news for those who want Chetel's house to be turned into a museum to the Underground Railroad because it takes away an incentive to tear down the house. E-mail us at [Stoop@BrooklynPaper.com](mailto:Stoop@BrooklynPaper.com).



Parents Hemalee Patel (in scarf) and Jim Findlay (center) talk to former teacher Eloise White outside the now-closed Brooklyn Children's Academy Pre-School on Dean Street last Tuesday night, where they claim they found unsafe conditions (inset).

### That's a nice rack!

By Dana Rubinstein

The Brooklyn Paper

Fort Greene is the latest neighborhood to join the city's bike-rack craze — the neighborhood is getting 72 of them. So no longer will local two-wheelers need to chain their Schwinn to rickety signposts or an ornery neighbor's wrought-iron gates: the small upside-down-U-shaped racks and the large upside-down-W-shaped racks will be installed at 51 sites throughout Fort Greene and Clinton Hill.

The racks were borne from a meeting of Green Fort Greene and Clinton Hill, the neighborhood-wide effort to foster sustainable living practices. Gil Rosen, a software consultant and Fort Greene resident, attended a meeting this summer and decided he was going to tackle the bike rack issue.

"Just having the racks will increase ridership," said Rosen. Rosen is correct, according to Wiley Norvell, spokesman for Transportation Alternatives, a cyclist advocacy group.

"Every bike trip begins and ends with bike parking," said Norvell. "Right now, we have one bike rack for every 35 bike riders in New York City. That's not enough."

What is enough?

"Chicago has one bike rack for every four cyclists," said Norvell.

Rosen got the bike racks the old-fashioned way: he did leg work. After cycling through



Annie Basulto secures her Schwinn to the new bike rack that was recently installed at the corner of DeKalb Avenue and Cumberland Street in Fort Greene.

In addition to racks in front of Rice (at DeKalb Avenue and Washington Park) and Tilly's coffee shop (at DeKalb and Vanderbilt avenues), the corner of Flatbush Avenue Extension and DeKalb Avenue will get a super-fancy bike shelter, which is like a bus shelter for bikes.

All of the racks should be installed by week's end.

the neighborhood to take note of existing bike racks, he got in touch with CityRacks, a city program. Earlier this year, the program installed 60 bike racks in Park Slope and Red Hook about three months after the community requested them.

### Kiddie center closed

By Mike McLaughlin

The Brooklyn Paper

A pre-school on Dean Street remains shuttered this week after allegedly unsafe building conditions that led the city to temporarily close it last month.

The Brooklyn Children's Academy Preschool has lost all 42 of its students and its staff, according to parents and teachers at the troubled school. A message on the executive director's voice mail says he will be away until Jan. 3.

Now parents are fighting to get reimbursed for tuition and teachers are dealing with bounced paychecks.

"I'm definitely freaked out because I'll have a court case against me for trying to cash a check," said Colleen Walsh, who taught at the pre-school for two months.

The uproar began when parents dropped off their children at the pre-school's new location at 25 Dean St. on Nov. 7, finding a building they said had no heating, only one working bathroom, exposed electrical outlets and peeling paint. (The Department of Buildings has since found 17 violations.)

Two days after that not-so-grand opening, the city shut down the pre-school for operating without a license.

Parents were angry.

They jeopardized the safety and well-being of my kid," said Amy Huggins.

Administrators fought back, saying parents have overstated the flaws of the Dean Street building.

"The things they were complaining about were not hazardous," said Andy Lewis, the pre-school's executive director.

"It was just not aesthetically pleasing. It was not a security concern, it was a visual concern."

The preschool had reopened with a temporary permit at Our Lady of Lebanon cathedral on Remsen Street, but only three children were attending before they dropped out.

The director said at the time that the pre-school hoped to return to 25 Dean St. by the end of January after inspections by the Buildings, Fire and Health departments.

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# Cops grab Gardens man as 'tomb bank bandit'

By Adam F. Hutton,  
Mike McLaughlin  
and Dana Rubinstein  
The Brooklyn Paper

## 84th Precinct

Police arrested a 26-year-old Carroll Gardens man on Tuesday for allegedly robbing two Downtown banks on Fulton Street four times in a five-day crime spree.

The hapless robber even robbed one of the banks twice in the same day.

Police report that the robber first struck on Dec. 14 at the HSBC branch at the corner of Fulton Street and Bortum Place, entering at around 10:30 am and handing a teller a note demanding money. The teller gave up a \$450 "suit bag" containing marked bills. When the robber demanded more money, the teller played dumb and the man eventually fled.

The next day, police say the same man walked into the Bank of America just one block away, again at about 10:30 am. This time, his note demanded \$40,000 and included a threat to shoot through the Plexiglas barrier.

The 22-year-old teller handed over \$3,500, but, again, the robber demanded more. When he didn't get any more, he ran off.

The robber returned to the same Bank of America on Monday morning — and again on Monday afternoon.

In the 10 am incident, he handed the teller a note and got away with \$2,700. The suspect returned four hours later and got away with another \$1,100.

Police finally arrested their suspect at 9 am on Dec. 18. He was standing in front of the same bank, where an employee recognized him and called the cops.

When they arrested him, he had another note demanding money in his pocket according to a law enforcement source familiar with the case.

## DUMBO heists

Two DUMBO grocery stores were robbed in separate attacks on Dec. 9, police said.

In the first incident, two gun-toting perps entered a store on Jay Street between Front and Water streets at around 10 pm.

One gunman pistol-whipped his 26-year-old victim and stole \$800 from the cash register.

In the second incident, a high-end supermarket on Front Street was burglarized for three laptop computers, cops said.

The thief also tried to crack the safe during his overnight attack.

## D'oh nuts!

Cops in Boreum Hill arrested a man for stealing a woman's wallet at a Smith Street donut shop on Dec. 16 — but later discovered that he was an unregistered sex offender.

Police say the 39-year-old man snatched his victim's wallet out of her purse at the donut store, which is at the corner of Bergen Street, at about 5:30 pm.

After his arrest, a records check revealed that he was a convicted sex offender who had not registered with the state as required by law, cops said.

## Derring 'do

Three men disguising their faces with "do-rags" robbed an 80-year-old man of his rent money while the victim walked up the stairs of the DeKalb Avenue subway station on Dec. 13.

The daring 12:20 pm robbery netted the three thugs \$750, cash that the man was supposed to deliver to his landlord.

## Back turned

A thief stole a woman's bag as she was trying on a coat at a popular Fulton Mall department store on Dec. 13.

The 42-year-old victim told police she was admiring a new winter coat at the store, which is near Hoyt Street, at about 2:30 pm. She set her bag down for just a moment, but it was long enough for the thief to strike.

Fortunately, the bag contained only \$90.

## Big burg

A thief made off with thousands of dollars in jewelry in electronics after breaking into three Livingston Street apartments on Dec. 12.

Cops say the thief broke into

## POLICE BLOTTER

### 'I'll take it!'

A woman who tried on \$7,500 in jewelry at a State Street shop on Dec. 10 loved the diamonds and gold so much that she walked out without paying.

Cops say the suspect went into the shop, which is between Bond and Nevins streets, at about 10:30 am and asked to see a diamond pendant on a white metal chain.

### Targeted

Beware of unusual bumps in the women's department.

A 40-year-old Eastern Parkway resident was shopping in a big discount department store in the Atlantic Terminal Mall on Dec. 12 at around 4 pm when she felt what she later described as a "bump."

Suspicious, she checked her bag and discovered that someone had stolen her wallet, which held \$80, her driver's license, credit card and Green Card.

### Shop mishap

A thief snatched a woman's purse from her shopping cart after she diverted her attention for just a few minutes on Dec. 10.

The 22-year-old victim told cops that she was shopping at a discount store at the Atlantic Center Mall at around 4 pm when she briefly left her shopping cart unattended.

Minutes later (surprise, surprise), the purse — which held \$70, three credit cards, her driver's license, a MetroCard, gift cards, and an Adelphi University ID card — was gone.

### 88th Precinct

### Good deed

A panhandler was satisfied by a generous donation of \$5 early on Dec. 14 and chased his benefactor down St. Felix Street and DeKalb Avenue at around 4 am and gave the panhandler the \$5.

The generous 34-year-old told cops that he had just left a bodega at the corner of St. Felix Street and DeKalb Avenue at around 4 am and gave the panhandler the \$5.

But the beggar wasn't satisfied, so he pulled his knife and gave chase. The generous man handed over another \$20 and the beggar put down the knife.

This was the second time the victim had been robbed in Fort Greene. About nine years ago, he was mugged at the corner of South Elliott Street and DeKalb Avenue, he told cops.

### Smoke signal

Cops nabbed a 30-year-old for using forged license plates after they approached him for smoking what the police referred to as a "marijuana cigarette."

The stoner had been idling in his 1993 Chevy truck at 10 pm on Downing Street, between Gates and Putnam avenues.

Cops said he caught their attention because he was smoking a doobie.

After further inspection, cops found he was carrying forged license plates. They collared him and charged him with criminal possession of the forged licenses, a felony.

### Violent saga

Two large groups of teens battled it out on Vanderbilt Avenue in a wide-ranging fight on Dec. 10.

The action started when one group encountered the other near the corner of Atlantic Avenue at around 4:30 pm and a fight broke out.

After that brawl, a 13-year-old member of one of the groups was approached from behind by as many as 30 guys.

One of the guys asked him if he was a Blood, but before he could answer, another hit him on the back of the head with a piece of wood.

He tried to fight back but was

### 67th Precinct

### Rob spree

Two men robbed a 49-year-old man at gunpoint on Huntington Street at around noon on Dec. 15, cops said.

The criminals netted \$1,300, plus assorted ATM and credit cards, in the theft, which took place between Columbia and Hicks streets.

### Snow job

Three men robbed a man shoveling snow on Beard Street on Dec. 16.

The three men, about 18-20 years old, pointed a handgun at the 51-year-old victim as he hid his chore near the corner of Dwight Street, and said, "Just give us the wallet. Don't give no trouble."

The victim complied, losing \$650, although one of the suspects complained: "Hurry up, you're taking too long."

No arrests have been made.

### \$7 stickup

A trip to the store cost a woman more than she expected on Dec. 15.

On her way home from shopping at 8:20 pm, the 26-year-old woman was stopped on the cor-

ner of Hicks and Warren streets by a man who brandished a firearm and said: "Give me your wallet. I don't want any problems."

### Hook shooting

A man shot a 35-year-old man in a store on Henry Street on Dec. 17, police said.

The victim, who was at work in the business, which is between West Ninth and Huntington streets, was shot a single time in his knee. Police sources say the shooting was not a part of a robbery.

The victim was taken to Long Island College Hospital for treatment for "non-life-threatening injuries," the police said.

No arrests have been made, but the police are questioning a suspect, the New York Sun reported.

The victim got his nose treated at Brooklyn Hospital.

### 76th Precinct

### Rob spree

Two men robbed a 49-year-old man at gunpoint on Huntington Street at around noon on Dec. 15, cops said.

The criminals netted \$1,300, plus assorted ATM and credit cards, in the theft, which took place between Columbia and Hicks streets.

### Snow job

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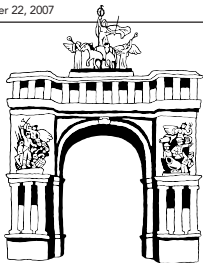
**Get your Gersh on**  
The Brooklyn Paper Editor Gersh Kuntzman (left) pours some bubbly for Daily News scribe Jotham Sederstrom and Robert Guskind of the Gowanus Lounge at the celebratory "Year in Review" episode of BCAT's "Reporter Roundtable." The classy show (hence Kuntzman's tuxedo) will premiere on Friday, Dec. 21, at 9 pm and be repeated on Dec. 24 and 31, at 1 pm; Dec. 25 and Jan. 1 at 1:30 and 9:30 pm; Dec. 26 and Jan. 2 at 2 and 10 pm. BCAT is on channel 56 on Time Warner and channel 69 on Cablevision.

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# THE STOOP

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## Tearing up her ugly divorce

**M**y newly divorced South Slope friend — let's just call her Linda — was over at my house. She was angry at her ex-husband and really stressed out over all the changes in her life.

"You have to try this exercise," I told her. "You take a piece of paper and rip it up into chunks, all the while envisioning your ex-husband and your relationship with him."

I had learned about this healing exercise from Marianne Gunther, a fellow Park Sloper who is also a Licensed Creative Art Therapist who is starting up a support group for divorcing women.

I handed her an old copy of The Brooklyn Paper that was lying around the house.

"Just don't rip up the page with my column on it!" I told her. She tore apart the front page instead with a true viciousness. Good, get those feelings out, I thought.

"Next, pick up all the little pieces of shredded paper," I told her. "And glue them back together into a picture." I left her alone for a few moments to create in peace and quiet. Whatever came out would be something new, a clean page, so to speak.

When she finished I looked at what she had done. It looked suspiciously like an axe, I thought. No, maybe more like a judge's gavel. Oh dear.

The exercise is one of the techniques that Gunther plans to use in her upcoming Divorce Support Group for Women. I decided that my friend ought to join this group, rather than relying on my less-than-expert direction.

In fact, I could have used this myself, when I got divorced almost three years ago.

According to Gunther, divorce is a true grief process and people who are going through it need to experience all the stages of grieving, just as if someone dear had died. Unfortunately, most people sidestep those feelings and translate them into anger or litigation.

"How do you make life about more than this?" asks Gunther. "I'm not going to spend the rest of my days reacting to my ex-husband, so how can I mourn the loss and move on?"

When Gunther herself divorced back in 2001, she belonged to a women's support group in Park Slope that saved her sanity. That group, which met at the Brooklyn Society for Ethical Culture, no longer exists. So she met with the director and offered to start up a new group.

This group will meet once a week at the Ethical Culture building on Prospect Park West, between First and Second streets. Women will get together and, guided by Gunther, support each other, get practical information and referrals, and use art-therapy techniques to both process and contain their feelings. The fee for each meeting is \$25.

Looking at my friend's collage, I decided that she must still be in the "process" part of things, rather than the "contain" part. "Try it again," I suggested. I gave her a copy of one of this newspaper's bitter rivals to rip up (editor's note: How did such a rag get into your house, Wendy?). "Here, I'll help you."

We both ripped the pages with glue, tossing the little pieces of paper about my living room. We gathered them up together and put them in a pile for her to start gluing. When she was all finished, I came over to the table where she was working and took a look.

It looked just like a dollar sign now. Progress, I thought, not perfect — but progress.

If you are interested in joining this group, call (347) 628-9279 or e-mail [listingart@yahoo.com](mailto:listingart@yahoo.com).

Wendy Porte is a freelance writer and parenting expert who lives in Park Slope.

## THE KITCHEN SINK

Our pal — and former employee — Patrick Gallaheue has just been named the new transit reporter for the New York Post. We always knew he'd amount to something, though the fact that he's still at the Post means we were only half right! ... Pedestrians delight! The Department of Transportation has finally removed the left-turn bay for drivers turning onto Union Street from the northbound lanes on Fourth Avenue. It may not sound like much, but finally, pedestrians have a safety island in the middle of that booming boulevard. ... Join us in a hearty "Kitchen Sink" welcome to the Brooklyn Botanic Garden's new director of horticulture, Mark Fisher. Fisher gets the promotion after serving as the curator of the tropical pavilion. He's been at the Gardens since 1984. ... Spotted the Treach Truck making a rare Brooklyn appearance on Union Street, just down the hill from the Grand Army Plaza greenmarket last Saturday. Here's hoping the truck continues to ply our streets.

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By Dana Rubinstein

The Brooklyn Paper

Union Market won't be opening its South Slope location until January — but neighbors are already wondering whether the arrival of the upscale grocer marks a tectonic shift in the neighborhood's character or whether it simply means that a new supermarket is opening.

North Slopers have been enjoying the fruits (and veggies and artisanal bread) of having the original Union Market at the corner of Union Street and Sixth Avenue since 2005. But some South Slopers see the store's arrival as another nail in the gentrification coffin for their grittier part of the neighborhood.

But there's no fighting it: The market has spoken. Union Market's customers no longer only live in the tony North Slope. They live below Ninth Street now.

"A supermarket like Union Market follows a population that can support it," said Roslyn Huebner, of Agway and Huebner Realty, who has sold homes in the neighborhood for 20 years.

Indeed, Union Market co-owner Marko Lalic said he and partner Martin Nunez and Paul Fernandez decided to open a branch in the South Slope because their patrons there requested it.

"Since we opened in 2005, we've been receiving calls from our South Slope customers inviting us to open a store there, since the neighborhood is really under-served," said Lalic, who calls Union Market "a neighborhood store," but with prices that tend towards specialty market levels.

Shoppers in the South Slope currently have several, not-all-together-satisfactory options: they can get their fancy goods at several smaller groceries, like Grab, on Seventh Avenue between 14th and 15th streets; they can head to Steve's C-Town on Ninth Street, where the prices are good, but the selection of high-end products is limited; they can go to Fairway in Red Hook (which will consume half a day if you don't have a car); or they can join the Park Slope Food Co-op (and work one three-hour shift every month).

The Union Market could fill the sweet spot for South Slope shoppers — and make gentrification far more palatable than it has proven to be in, say, Williamsburg.

The reason? Not only is Union Market owned by Brooklynites, but the rise of the South Slope that the market symbolizes has been so gradual, residents say.

"It's been a pretty gentle change over the past few years," said Joslin Phillips, who will open a specialty beer bar called Beer Table, on Seventh Avenue, between 14th and 15th



Union Market co-owners Marko Lalic (left) and his partner Martin Nunez at their original supermarket on Union Street. The two will soon be opening on Seventh Avenue between 12th and 13th streets.

streets. His description of gentle change was echoed by, of all people, had boy architect Robert Scamano, whose firm has profited handsomely from the insanely fast gentrification in Greenpoint and Williamsburg.

"The change in the South Slope is happening gradually, which is probably the better way to go," said Scamano, who is building condos on 20th Street.

Indeed, while Fourth Avenue, once better known for its flat-fixes, has sprouted several 12-story towers (including the Karl Fischer-designed Vue, pictured), the South Slope's main drag along Seventh Avenue still has plenty of empty storefronts, which might indicate that the market is not booming as fast as some landlords might like.

There's the long-empty space across from Cafe Sciencio, and there's the one-time home of Nest, a modern design store that was between 12th and 13th streets.

In 2004, Jihan Kim, the then-optimistic owner of Nest, told

the Washington Post that "Brooklyn is hot... There's been a huge influx of people, and they are paying attention to modern design."

Three years later, Kim closed her store.

And there's the very space that is now occupied by Union Market, a former bar that had been closed for years.

Even some veterans of the bruising battles over gentrification and out-of-context development slung over the market's impending opening.

"Every neighborhood goes through some kind of gentrification," said local activist Anne Bruchear, who said gentrification has not yet spoiled the South

Slope's small-town feel. "You can still walk down the street and say hello to your neighbors, and you're not necessarily looking in the mirror when you do it," he said.



The Vue, a Karl Fischer-designed apartment building, that will soon be housing tenants on 16th Street near Fourth Avenue.

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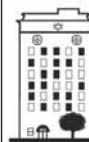
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# Mugged in the middle of the day in the center of the Slope

By Gersh Kuntzman

**The Brooklyn Paper**  
Two perps mugged a man at gunpoint on Seventh Avenue in daylight on Dec. 13, stealing \$1,000, cops said.  
The victim told police that he was between Seventh and Eighth streets at around 1:40 pm when the two perps approached. One showed off a

## POLICE BLOTTER

gun and said, "Don't move. Give me the money."  
That was enough to convince the 52-year-old Long Island man to hand over the cash.  
Police are looking for two 20-year-old black men, both 5-

feet-6 and 150 pounds.  
**Armed rob**  
A woman walking home on Dec. 16 was robbed at gunpoint in broad daylight on Eighth Street, police said.  
The 27-year-old victim told

cops that she was almost at her door at Third Avenue, when a man jumped out, pointed a silver pistol at her head and said, "Give it to me."  
The victim complied, handing over a purse that contained \$152, various cards and a cellphone.  
The perp fled towards Fourth Avenue after the 1 pm crime.

## Teen robbed

Two thugs — one of whom seemed to be armed with more than a finger — mugged an 18-year-old for his iPod on Eighth Street on Dec. 16 — but both were later arrested, police said.

Cops say that the teenager was walking on the block between Seventh and Eighth avenues at around 6:30 pm when two fellow teens approached.

One perp simulated having a gun in his pocket and said, "What do you got? I got a gun." He then took the teen's iPod, and both thugs fled towards Prospect Park.

Just 15 minutes later, police caught up with the two hoodlums, one age 15, the other 16, and arrested them for robbery. The gun turned out to be a fake, but it still earned both perps a charge of fourth degree weapons possession.

## Moving violation

A quick-thinking thief stole some fancy photographic equipment from a man who was raving bones into a 12th Street home on Dec. 15, cops said.

The victim, who actually lives in New Jersey, told cops that he was moving the equipment at around 4 pm. He turned his back on a box that he had left in the front yard, and when he returned, it was gone from the scene, which is between Fifth and Sixth Avenues.

The man told police that he lost \$2,050 in equipment, including a \$1,500 tripod.

## Data smog

Two computers were stolen out of a Lincoln Place apartment on Dec. 12 while the residents were at work, police said.

The victim told police that she had left the apartment, which is between Seventh and Eighth avenues, at around 8 am and did not return until 5:45 that night. In the interim, someone broke in through a back window and left with a Macintosh and a Dell laptop, a digital camera, a Coach purse, a flat-screen monitor and various credit cards.

A construction worker one floor below told cops that he saw the perp — a 25-year-old, 6-foot, 160-pound black man — leaving the building at around 3:15 pm.

Two more computers — again a Mac and a PC — were stolen from a Fifth Avenue apartment on Dec. 11, cops said.

The victim told police that she was not in the apartment, which is between Dean and Bergen streets, between noon and 6 pm. When she got back, she found the front door open and the two computers missing from the apartment, which is shared by three women.

## Eighth mug

Two perps demanded a woman's cash, but settled for her handbag in a mugging late at night on Dec. 10.

The 29-year-old woman told police that the two men approached her as she reached the corner of President Street and Eighth Avenue at around 11:15 pm.

"Give me your money," one of the thugs said. When the woman said, "I don't have any money," the thug changed the demand: "Give me your bag."  
She turned over the purse, which contained various cards, a cellphone, but no money. The perps fled before she could get a good look at them.

## Evil tresses

A woman who entered a 12th Street hair salon saying she was selling hair care merchandise didn't make a sale, but walked out with one of the employees' handbags, cops said.

## Eatery bitten

One of the most favorite Seventh Avenue restaurants was broken into after it closed on Dec. 9 and an unknown quantity of cash was stolen.

The owner of the Italian wine-bar-style restaurant, which is at the corner of Third Street, told cops that the joint was secure when he left for the night. But when he returned the next morning, he discovered that a perp had entered through a back door and broken open the cash cabinet.

## Van taken

Five gun-toting youngsters ranging in age from 16 to 21 — robbed a Fourth Avenue dry-cleaning shop's delivery van on Dec. 14 — but were later arrested in neighboring Kensington during their joyride.

The delivery man had parked the 2005 Honda van in one of the cleaners, which is at 14th Street, at around 10:30 pm. He left the van unlocked, which allowed the thieves, four men and the 16-year-old girl, to take off with their ill-gotten wheels.

But the joyride ended a few hours later, when officers in the neighboring 66th Precinct pulled over the car near the corner of McDonald Avenue and Albee Road. Further investigation yielded a loaded Smith and Wesson pistol — and all five occupants were charged with weapons possession.

## Wheely bad

It was a crazy week for car thefts and auto break-ins in Park Slope. According to police records, four additional cars were stolen and at least three were broken into last week. Here's a roundup:

• A man who parked his 1993 Plymouth Voyager on Douglass Street between Fourth and Fifth avenues on Dec. 13 gave the keys to an auto repair shop. When the mechanic went to move the car at around 6:30 pm, he noticed that it was gone.

A floor below told cops that he saw the perp — a 25-year-old, 6-foot, 160-pound black man — leaving the building at around 3:15 pm.

A 1994 Chevy Sport was stolen from a spot on Third Avenue between First and Third streets sometime between Dec. 5 and Dec. 11.

A 1998 Plymouth Voyager (what is it with Plymouth Voyagers this week?) was stolen from its spot on Sixth Avenue between Union and President streets sometime between Dec. 10 and Dec. 12.

A 2000 Honda Civic that had been parked on 14th Street between Seventh and Eighth avenues on Dec. 10 was gone the next day when the owner went to retrieve it.

In break-ins:  
• The airbag, seat headrest, in-dash radio and back door panel were stolen out of a Staten Island man's 2005 Jeep that he had parked on President Street at around 9:30 pm on Dec. 11. He returned the next morning to the car, which had been parked between Fifth and Sixth avenues, and discovered the damage.

• A Boston woman's laptop was stolen out of her Honda, which she had parked on DeGraw Street at around 1 am on Dec. 15. Later that morning, she returned to the car, which had been between Third and Fourth avenues, and found that her laptop had been swiped.

• Another laptop was stolen from a New Jersey man's car, which he had parked on Prospect Park West on Dec. 15. The man left the car between First and Second streets at around 9:45 am.



## Letters to Iraq

Fourth- and fifth-grade students at PS 154 in Windsor Terrace, including Alyssa Contreras, 11, hand over hundreds of letters for soldiers in Iraq to Det. Michael Cleary of the 72nd Precinct, who is collecting letters from kids throughout the neighborhood.

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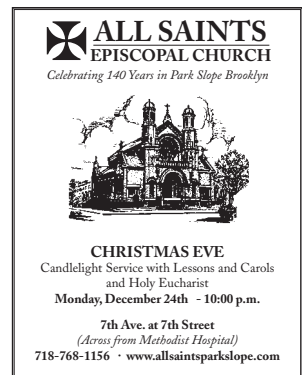
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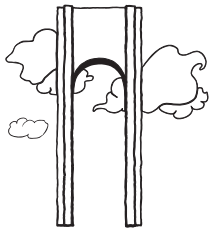
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# THE stoop

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## History: Thing of the past?

**T**hanks to two famous fevers, Dec. 16 is the most definitive date in the history of Bay Ridge. But by the looks of things around town, it doesn't seem like many people know why.

This past Sunday quietly came and went, despite the fact that it marked both the 154th anniversary of the birthday of Bay Ridge, as well as the 30th anniversary of the release of "Saturday Night Fever."

Yet while these two events — literally and figuratively — put Bay Ridge on the map, few seemed to notice.

"I don't believe anything is going on to commemorate the day," one member of the Bay Ridge Historical Society told this columnist last week.

Likewise, when a manager at Lenny's Pizzeria on 86th Street — made famous in the opening sequence of "Saturday Night Fever" — was asked if the shop was doing anything special for the occasion, he responded with a simple "no."

Nor was there any public mention of either anniversary at the Community Board 10 meeting on Monday, Dec. 17, the day after the historic day.

Perhaps we shouldn't be surprised when history isn't a priority in Bay Ridge. After all, this is the same place where a row of stately Victorian homes was bulldozed without so much as a sigh, a time capsule was tipped out of the ground 47 years too early and the majestic Green Church could be demolished — and that's just the last six months!

Enough, I say! After all, any column called "Yellow Hook-er" couldn't let this one slide.

What's in a name? Here's what. When the first Dutch settlers arrived in this neck of the woods in the 1500s, they called the area Yellow Hook, after the strange tint of the local soil.

But in 1853, an outbreak of fatal Yellow Fever broke out. As news of the growing epidemic spread, many locals were concerned that the name "Yellow Hook" might be associated with the disease and subsequently spoil a wave of planned development in the area.

And so, on a cold winter's day — Dec. 16, 1853 — a group of local prominent landowners voted unanimously to rename Yellow Hook as Bay Ridge and save their fellow residents in the real-estate business.

Given the success of such a business move, I'm surprised so many people around here forgot about it.

Joe Jordan is a third generation Ridgite.

### THE KITCHEN SINK

Dec. 16 may have marked the end of **Yellow Hook**, but it marked a new beginning for former Yellow Hook columnist **Matt Lysiot**, who is now practicing his craft at a little outfit called the Daily News. Good luck, Matt! ... What does the **Department of Transportation** have against **Ferrone's Hall Academy**? That's what some parents were thinking after the city denied a request to put a traffic light outside the high school at 99th Street and Shore Road. ... Hats off to our pals **Phil Nuzzo**, **Theresa Panicali** and everyone in the **chair at St. Anselm** for their free Christmas concert last Saturday night. The house was packed and the joint was jumping (for the Lord, of course). ... You have a few more days to reduce your holiday guilt by bringing toys to **AH!Tone Communications** on 67th Street and Fifth Avenue, which is collecting presents for victims of domestic violence. ... Meet the new board, same as the old board: Congrats to the executive officers of **CB10** who were all re-elected for the 2008 term. ... Our pal, **Xaverian HS** senior **Anthony Loris**, has been accepted to Stanford! Naturally, he was excited. "I'm ecstatic and overwhelmed," he told us. And, naturally, the school's president, **Sal Ferrera**, was equally excited for Anthony's "hard work" and his parents' "good judgment" — though he couldn't resist putting in a plug, citing the **Shore Road** school's excellent "preparation for college."

E-mail us at [Stoop@BrooklynPaper.com](mailto:Stoop@BrooklynPaper.com).

### YELLOW HOOKER



Joe Jordan



VFW post commander Angel Rios shows off the tickets that he received for preparing food on site. The bitter joke? Rios' post does not have a kitchen!

## Veterans steamed over ice

By Joe Jordan  
for The Brooklyn Paper

They served their country. Then they were served with fines.

For serving ice! To comply, Rios and a deputy paid \$105 each for a five-day training course, just to be certified to dish out ice cubes to dues-paying veterans.

Yet the post's troubles, according to the vets, still haven't stopped. "We want to pay," Rios told The Brooklyn Paper.

Rios also noted that the fines are an undue burden for a non-profit organization that exists for the noble purpose of providing vets a place to feel welcome.

"They served their country, they can come in here and have friends. For some, this may be the last place left for them on

earth," added Rios, who is concerned about the overall direction of the Health Department's crackdown.

"I thought we beat Fascism," says Rios.

The vets' cause has even enlisted local bi-partisan support. "Look, these guys are volunteers who served in Korea, Vietnam — overseas for this country. It is unfortunate that authorities would be unyielding, considering the circumstances here," said Mike Long, chairman of the New York State Conservative Party and a Bay Ridge liquor store owner.

Long was quick to note that while "the law applies to everyone," many of the regulations cited are just more examples of an oppressive "nanny-state."

Councilman Vince Gentile (D-Bay Ridge) sent a letter to the Health Department on Nov. 28 asking at least to authorize

the removal of the late fees. "It is a non-profit organization, not a professional bar, and they were unaware of the regulations," said Gentile spokesperson Kwame Patterson.

"They've tried to rectify the situation, and shouldn't be punished for doing so."

It's not the first time that the Health Department has made headlines for dusting off the ol' rule book to crack down on Brooklyn businesses.

Earlier this year, Moonshine Bar in Red Hook was busted because a bartender inserted a lime into a Corona beer — a time-honored tradition — with his bare hands instead of with tongs, gloves, or some other device.

Unlike limes, though, violations involving ice are "cited upon occasion," according to a Health Department spokesperson, who was quick to add that "ice machines have been implicated in food-borne illness outbreaks elsewhere in the country."

Rios doesn't buy it, but sees the regulation as petty and worse — "discrimination."

"What about private citizens who buy refrigerators that manufacture ice?" he asked. "Do they need a permit to handle the ice in their own homes?"

## Victory at Victory (for now)!

By Loren Bonner  
for The Brooklyn Paper

The emergency room at the beleaguered Victory Memorial Hospital will remain open even after the state closes down the entire facility by Feb. 1. State Sen. Marty Golden (R-Bay Ridge), Rep. Vito Rossella (R-Bay Ridge) and Councilman Vince Gentile (D-Bay Ridge) announced last Thursday that the hospital will maintain its emergency room until a plan for an urgent care center — a step down from a 24-hour emergency room — is approved by the state Department of Health.

"We want to see a safe transition from hospital to urgent care center and nursing home," said Dr. Anne Mathis, a Department of Health spokesperson. Although the decision only keeps the ER open a little longer, lawmakers were calling the decision a win for the community.

"I am gratified to see that the Department of

Health recognizes the danger ... if Victory were suddenly closed," said Gentile.

Last month, Victory backers sued the state, demanding that at least the emergency room remain open. The lawsuit is an attempt to reverse the state's decision to close the hospital.

The 243-bed Victory Memorial is one of the nine New York hospitals that were recommended for closure earlier this year by the Berger Commission, which cited the hospital's November, 2006, bankruptcy filing and "severe financial trouble" as the main reason for the Feb. 1 shutdown.

If Victory facilities were to close, the 17,000 people who visit the emergency room each year would be redirected to hospitals that are further away. "The battle to permanently keep open the emergency room continues, and for the good of the community, I will not rest as long as the health and safety of the neighborhood is in jeopardy," said Golden.

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# VZ bridge 'fix' on its way

By Noah Zuss  
for The Brooklyn Paper

Exasperated Verrazano-Narrows Bridge commuters may soon get some relief from prolonged delays thanks to a deal between local lawmakers and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority to implement traffic-relief measures on the under-repair span.

The agreement, which calls for a new high occupancy lane on the Gowanus Expressway during the evening rush hour, came on the same day that lawyers were scheduled to appear in State Supreme Court for yet another hearing on a lawsuit demanding greater traffic mitigation efforts from the state transportation agency.

Thanks to the agreement, the lawyer for the group of local lawmakers that filed the suit earlier this year asked for the case to be adjourned until the relief measures are implemented and the results can be studied.

This week, the lawmakers were claiming victory.

"We first sat down to negotiate [with the MTA] in June because we knew the traffic backups from the project was a problem," said Councilman Jimmy Oddo, (R-Dyker Heights).

"The lawsuit is the biggest reason we are here to announce [the traffic relief measures] today. Make no mistake, the MTA acted because the specter of its employees testifying under oath ... was highly unappealing."

Naturally, the MTA dis-



Councilman Jimmy Oddo (R-Dyker Heights) and Rep. Vito Fossella (R-Bay Ridge) announce that traffic on the Verrazano Bridge may improve, thanks to a new deal with the MTA.

agreed. "We still believe the lawsuit is without merit," said Hillary Ring, the MTA's director of government affairs, who added that the traffic-relief measures would be put in place because they "made sense" for the city and the MTA.

"We do want to reduce commute times during the ongoing construction," he said.

The MTA claims that the new HOV lane on the Gowanus Expressway between 65th and

92nd streets could slash commute times by 15-30 minutes. The agency also believes the extra lane will cut down on traffic backups through Bay Ridge, with more drivers staying on the highway instead of approaching the bridge from streets.

But the lane won't be available until April 2008. Traffic during the ongoing reconstruction of the bridge has been a problem on both sides of the fabled span for nearly seven months.

## 62/68 BLOTTER

# Salon has hair-raising experience

By Joe Jordan  
and Michael Giardina  
for The Brooklyn Paper

## 68th Precinct

Thieves let themselves out the front door of a 77th Street hair salon — after letting themselves in through the wall of a vacant adjoining shop.

And the safe was a piece of cake compared to the wall. At around 10:30 a.m., the 30-year-old resident returned to find her front door kicked in and \$5,000 and jewelry missing from a back room.

Six hours later, a 23rd Avenue apartment was broken into. The 45-year-old returned to find that his home, which is near 62nd Street, had been ransacked and \$3,500 in electronics and jewelry was missing, police said.

Two sisters had their cash and jewelry stolen by two thugs who had answered their want ad for love on Dec. 12.

The sisters, who are in their 30s, set up a meeting for the two prospective "husbands" to come to their Bay Parkway apartment, which is near 63rd Street. The two thugs arrived at around 1:15 a.m. and had a few drinks with the ladies.

Without any warning, however, one of the perps pulled out a black pistol and demanded money and jewelry, while the other searched through their pocketbooks and took \$350, cellphones and jewelry, police said.

The perps ran off with the goods, and told the victims that if they contacted police, they would be killed.

It is unclear if the incident has soured the women on the marriage.

**Unwilling deposit**

A man who forgot his wallet on the counter of a Bay Parkway bank on Dec. 12 later returned to find it was gone — and there were some extra charges on his credit cards.

Video surveillance at the bank, which is near 65th Street, shows a perp running off with the goods at around 4 p.m.

The wallet held \$1,200 — and credit cards, which were later used, police said.

**Johnny Friendly**

A man who had his new credit card stolen from the mailbox of his 63rd Street apartment, later helped positively ID and arrest the thief that illegally charged more than \$500 to the cards on Dec. 11.

The 58-year-old's card was stolen in October from the apartment, which is near 18th Avenue. After contacting police, he later ID'd the thief by watching her on surveillance footage using the stolen cards in a local CVS.

The perp, who charged \$592 over a two month span, was an acquaintance of the victim for more than seven years, police said.

**62nd Precinct**

A car was broken into and robbed on 86th Street while its owner was working out at a gym on Dec. 10.

The 33-year-old car owner returned to her vehicle, which was near Bay 20th Street, following her workout, at around 2:20 p.m. She discovered her driver's-side window was busted and her cellphone, credit and debit cards were gone, police said.

**86th Precinct**

A woman was mugged and robbed after she parked her car on 77th Street on Dec. 15.

The 25-year-old parked the car near 20th Avenue at around 9:30 p.m. and had started walking home when the perp approached her. He pulled the purse from her arm, and punched her in the face, swip-

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# A Food Co-op of their own?

## Fort Greeners plot way to pick Park Slope clean

By Dana Rubinstein

The Brooklyn Paper

Fort Greene and Clinton Hill foodies are contemplating the organic crime of the century: they're considering starting a rival version of the Park Slope Food Co-op.

Kathryn Zaczynski, the Clinton Hill-based operator of the eco-friendly Web site guilifreeshipping.com, and DK Holland, a Food Co-op member who lives in Fort Greene, are actively plotting to open their own members-owned-and-operated supermarket.

"I was talking to DK and said, 'Wouldn't it be great if we had a food co-op in our neighborhood?'" recalled Zaczynski.

Holland took to the idea like a vegan to Quorn mycoprotein patties — in part due to her enthusiasm for the Park Slope Food Co-op, the Union Street supermarket between Sixth and Seventh avenues that Holland joined in July.

Holland speaks of the Park Slope Co-op like a woman in the blush of first love, effusing about its diversity, civility and absence of commercialism.

She's even grown fond of the two-hour and 45-minute shift she's required to put in every four weeks — a longer of many of the Co-op's longer-serving members.

"My first job at the Co-op



Kathryn Zaczynski (right) and DK Holland, juggling produce that they bought at the Park Slope Food Co-op. They hope to recreate the Co-op in their native Fort Greene.

was as a check-in person, and on my first day, a blind person walked in and asked if he could

have someone shop for him," said Holland. "Someone was assigned, and I thought, 'This is

the way the world should be.'"

The Park Slope Food Co-op was founded with just 10 members in 1973 on do-gooder ideals of community, teamwork, and the notion that one should actually work to attain those things — principles for which it is ultimately esteemed and mocked.

In 2006, the food blog Chow ran a feature story called "Won't work for food" about the Co-op, in which the writer skewered its long lines and stringent work requirements, which she likened to a "Soviet-style re-education camp." Meanwhile, Gawker dubbed the Co-op the "world's most annoying grocery store."

But the very principles that irritate outsiders — coupled with the lack of affordable foodie-oriented stores in Fort Greene and Clinton Hill — is what prompted Holland and Zaczynski to pursue the idea of a co-op of their own.

Fort Greene and Clinton Hill do have their share of grocery stores, but none that would meet a gourmet's discerning needs. There's the Park Avenue at Atlantic Center, which Holland calls "a pit," the Associated on Myrtle Avenue, which satisfies Zaczynski's basic needs, but nothing more; the Bravo on Myrtle Avenue, which has limited foodie appeal; and the new Fresh Garden on Fulton Street, which has plenty of foodie ap-

peal (but high prices to match).

So far, Holland and Zaczynski have won the support of some acquaintances and, perhaps most importantly, of Joe Holzt, the general manager and a founding member of the Park Slope Food Co-op, who said that his 13,454-member grocery store has hundreds of members from Fort Greene and Clinton Hill.

"[A Fort Greene co-op] is a great idea," said Holzt. "I think there should be more food co-ops."

If it sounds odd that Holzt would support this organic uprising, don't forget that the Park Slope Food Co-op prides itself on "co-operation among co-operatives" — one of the seven principles set forth by the International Co-operative Alliance.

If Holzt is so willing to take on Holland and Zaczynski as mentees it's probably because the Co-op is surging with membership, up nearly five percent from last year. Each member has at least \$100 invested in the store, giving the \$29-million-a-year store assets in excess of \$1.3 million.

"We're not officially or unofficially looking to lose members," said Holzt, one of 60 paid staffers who handle the day-to-day operations of the store. "But overcrowding is a problem."

# MORTON'S TAKES ON UGER...

Continued from page 1

Porterhouse a little gristly on his last visit in July.

Two months later, the New York Times validated my impression, with reviewer Frank Bruni accusing the steakhouse of coasting and gloating.

Meanwhile, Morton's is not chopped liver (heck, they don't even serve it).

The Chicago-based chain's Manhattan location — one of 78 worldwide — got a 23 Zagat rating, though it lost some points for being "formal."

When I ate there, I liked the fact that the other items on the menu — like actual vegetables, real salads and fresh fish — are not just afterthoughts.

And the steak was outstanding. Was it as good as a Luger Porterhouse on its best day? No way. But Peter Luger hasn't had its best day in a while.

Not that Peter Luger co-owner Amy Rubenstein is worried about the newcomer.

"I think our quality is evident," she told me this week. Perhaps, but Morton's will hurt Luger with its prime cus-

## Here's the beef

News that Morton's of Chicago — an upscale chain steakhouse — had leased space at the Brooklyn Marriott finally gives borough beef lovers a prime chance. Here's how the newcomer fares against our legendary Porterhouse purveyor, Peter Luger, in our first ever steakhouse smackdown:

MORTON'S	NAME	PETER LUGER
1978	Opened	1887
Dark clubhouse with white linen tablecloths and no windows	Feel	German beer-hall with no tablecloths over well-worn wooden tables and waiters who are mean to you
78 (including Great Neck, NY)	Number of locations	Two (Brooklyn and Great Neck, NY)
Massive filet mignon and other things on the menu besides steak	Best known for	Massive Porterhouse and rude waiters (did I mention them?)
Wet-aged off-site	Steak aging technique	Dry-aged on site
23	Most recent Zagat rating	28
Founder's previous job was as food and beverage manager for Playboy clubs in the 1960s!	Fun fact	Bucking longstanding custom in the meat biz, Luger's beef is picked by the three women owners!

tomers; businessmen and women with expense accounts. Morton's, you see, takes credit cards while Peter Luger makes you take a J train to Marcy Avenue with \$500 in your pocket.

Plus, with 300 seats, it'll be much easier to get a table at Morton's — something that has become an impossible dream at Peter Luger (unless you like your 36-ounce steak at 4 pm or at midnight). So it's about time another steak has staked a claim to Brooklyn.

It's not the first time in recent months that an outsider has tried to dethrone a Brooklyn institution. Before Morton's decided to take on Peter Luger, Applebee's announced that it had hired Cake Man Raven to sell his wares at their location on Flatbush Avenue Extension — right across the street from cheese-cake-selling superstar, Junior's.

That battle began in earnest on Thursday with a big Applebee's media event. I was there, of course, sucking down Cake Man's desserts like a diabetic.

What can I say? I have a reputation to maintain.

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The new International House of Pancakes at the corner of Livingston and Bond streets in Downtown was packed on opening day Tuesday.

## PANCAKES...

Continued from page 1

"For years we've been asking each other, 'Why isn't there an IHOP Downtown and why aren't there more IHOPs in Brooklyn?'" added Cox.

The Downtown location is just the beginning of Cox and Cummins's IHOP empire.

After a rigorous screening at

IHOP's "Pancake College," the pair was given the right to develop three IHOPs in Brooklyn. And if the first day's business at the Downtown store is any indication, those other two locations will also be well received.

The Downtown store is their first IHOP, but not their first restaurant. Cox and Cummins, who grew up in Flatbush and

East Flatbush respectively, opened Famous Seaford in their old stomping grounds in 2006.

Oh, and the Rooty Tooty Fresh 'N Fruity? This ethereal combination of buttermilk pancakes smothered with fruit and whipped cream has been IHOP's signature dish since 1984.

It's unlikely that dieting Borough President Markowitz will dive in, but he is expected at the restaurant's ribbon-cutting ceremony next month, Cummins said.

with the market price being at a historic high, thefts are also at a historic high.

The metal is highly sought after, not just because of its value, but also because it is readily available and perfect for risk-averse criminals (who want to rob people in the street or break into a home?).

The incidence in thefts has gotten the attention of the scrap metal industry, too.

Earlier this year, Frank Cozzi, the chairman of the Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries, reminded his members to be on the lookout for stolen scrap.

He suggested a good rule of thumb for scrap metal dealers: Think twice if someone shady shows up with "mangled covers, funeral plaques or 20-foot lengths of copper downspouts tied to the top of a 1970 VW Beetle."

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OUR OPINION

# Downtown scores again

Downtown Brooklyn got a few more examples this week of what can happen when government gets out of the way and lets our borough's vibrant free market thrive.

On Monday, a large development company announced a significant deal to lease 40,000 square feet of unused retail space in a long-empty courthouse building on Adams Street. In a separate deal, the same company announced that it was bringing a 300-seat Morton's steakhouse — a high-end rival to our own Peter Luger — to unused retail space in the Brooklyn Marriott's annex.

Taken together, the upscale retail will turn an empty strip into a destination — and not just for Brooklyn Heights residents who have long ignored anything to the east of Borough Hall, but for all Brooklynites.

Already, the development company is talking about a Barney's or an Apple store along what will soon be a revitalized Adams Street.

The next day, Downtown workers and resi-

dents got some more good news: two hip-hop producers had opened an International House of Pancakes franchise on Livingston Street.

While the victuals may not be to everyone's liking, the already crowded IHOP — with its friendly staff and cheery interior — is obviously filling a gap that no government master plan had managed to solve during decades of "urban renewal" projects.

In fact, recent history has shown that the best urban renewal for Downtown Brooklyn has been a laissez-faire approach. While it doesn't work in every circumstance, in every neighborhood, getting government out of the way has proven to be very successful.

The 2004 upzoning of the area between the Brooklyn Academy of Music and the Manhattan Bridge has resulted in a half-dozen towers already going up, with more on the way — the beginnings of a new residential neighborhood of 30,000.

The market for new housing has spoken —

and developers have answered, thanks to a hands-off approach by city planners.

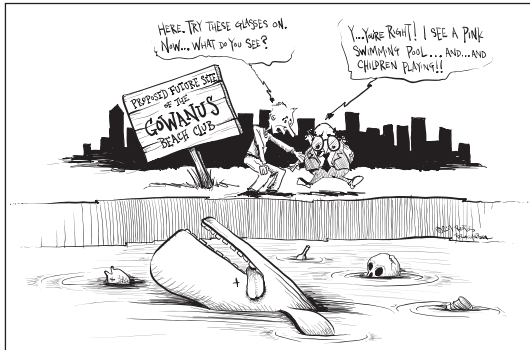
Ironically, those planners intended that 2004 upzoning to stimulate millions of square feet of office construction — but the market wasn't there. Had the city decreed a master plan for office towers — like a prior generation of planners did at the dour Metrotech complex nearby — developers would right now be constructing a chain of white elephants from BAM to the bridge.

Are there problems with all this development going on Downtown? Of course.

There remain serious questions about how the existing infrastructure will handle so many new residents. And we certainly do not support the use of eminent domain — another government intrusion — to tear down historic buildings.

But on balance, Downtown's market is far better off in the hands of the rebirth than in those of the bureaucrats.

ALL DRAWN OUT



LETTERS

# Expert: There is a way to fix Atlantic Yards traffic

To the editor,

Your article, "City can't curb Yards security" (Dec. 8) indicates a lack of understanding by the Council of Brooklyn Neighborhoods that buildings can be designed today to be far more blast resistant than they used to be, that measures can be taken to keep vehicles from getting too close to a building and, if required by the NYPD, that the stadium can be relocated further away from the street prior to construction.

But what still concerns the Brooklyn Chapter of the American Institute of Architects is the adverse impact the stadium will have on the traffic in the area. In hopes of mitigating the additional traffic anticipated when the stadium is in use, the Chapter suggests the following measures:

1. The city should prohibit the Nets arena from providing any off-street parking at the arena site. Instead, the city should provide municipal parking for approximately 1,000 cars at one or several locations in an industrial area in the Brownsville/East New York area, within walking distance of public transportation. This parking would be used on a daily basis for business people driving to work as well as for patrons attending basketball games.
- However, on game nights, either the Nets or the Atlantic Yards developer should be required to provide shuttle buses from the remote parking areas to the arena.
2. Eliminate parking on all major thoroughfares going to, or coming from, Manhattan during rush hours, and meter all side streets in the area. Enforce existing "Don't Block the Box" rules at all major intersections.
3. Eliminate parking permits for city employees' private vehicles to encourage them to take public transportation.
4. Discount bus and subway fares during off hours.

Of course, the best solution would be to reduce the density of the residential/commercial area in Atlantic Yards. If most of the existing streets would remain as city property, whether open for vehicular traffic or relegated to pedestrian use only, and the same floor area ratio is retained, the total buildable floor area would be reduced by approximately 20 percent, which would substantially reduce traffic.

The Chapter is very much in favor of bringing a professional basketball team to Brooklyn and developing the rail yard area, but we do not feel that enough thought has been given to the traffic impact of the overall development.

We believe that if our suggestions are adopted it will prevent a traffic disaster from occurring.

I, Donald Weston, Brooklyn Heights  
The writer is chair of the Urban Design Committee of the Brooklyn Chapter of the American Institute of Architects.

## Hanukkah shopping

To the editor,

This is in response to last week's letter from a Park Slope who was disturbed that there are no Hanukkah items in the two big box stores she visited ("Hanukkah haggadot," Dec. 15). I am also disturbed by this.

But I am also disappointed to discover that the writer focused her shopping on national chains rather than locally owned and operated small businesses.

Many of the local "Mom and Pop" stores in Park Slope have recently banded together to educate area residents in the art of buying locally. Local retailers are typically responsive to neighborhood needs and requests.

Furthermore, when people shop in their neighborhood stores, the money that they spend is recycled within the community at least three times. This is definitely not the case when people shop at national chain stores.

As for Hanukkah candles, Hanukkah gift wrap etc., our toy store has been carrying these items, and many more, for 30 years. We also offer a full range of Passover items in the Passover season.

And we are the only ones.

There are a number of other locally owned small stores in Park Slope that carry Hanukkah items and Passover items as well. Please consider the value of shopping locally,

rather than nationally.

Allen Brafman, Park Slope

The writer is owner of Little Things Toy Store on Seventh Avenue.

## Moses's sin

To the editor,

I enjoyed Tom Gilbert's column "Is O'Malley really evil" (Dec. 8). It is interesting to compare Robert Moses with one of today's major developers, Bruce Ratner and his Atlantic Yards project.

During the 1950s, Dodgers owner Walter O'Malley looked at various locations for a new baseball stadium — one that he planned to finance using his own money. With limited seating capacity at Ebbets Field, he said he needed a new modern stadium to remain financially viable.

Mega-builder Moses refused to allow him access to the current day Atlantic Yards project site. This location was easily accessible to thousands of baseball fans from all around the Big Apple via numerous subway lines.

And thousands of fans in eastern Queens and Nassau and Suffolk counties would have had direct access to this stadium via the LIRR. Imagine how different Brooklyn would have been if elected officials had stood up to Moses and allowed construction of a new stadium for the Dodgers in that area.

Contrast Walter O'Malley with Bruce

Ratner. O'Malley would have used his own money to finance a new stadium. Ratner is counting on favorable eminent domain rulings by Big Brother along with corporate welfare in the form of direct government funding, public infrastructure improvements, low interest loans and long-term tax exemptions. The final price tag for the public is still unknown.

In the end, O'Malley did leave town with our beloved Dodgers. On the other hand, Ratner is picking the pockets of taxpayers for a tidy sum.

So Robert Moses was no friend to city taxpayers or Brooklyn residents.

Larry Penner, Great Neck, New York

## Biking safe

To the editor,

The widespread disregard for bicycle laws jeopardizes the safety of good drivers and pedestrians throughout this neighborhood and all of Brooklyn ("They all want me dead now," Park Slope edition and online, Oct. 30). With bikes being so popular in the city, particularly for delivery services, you would think riders might take more care and consider their legal responsibility while traveling.

As of July 26, bicycle-riding delivery workers were required to wear helmets for work. In fact, their employers are required to supply the helmets. Yet constantly, I see

delivery workers on bikes wearing only baseball caps, zig-zagging between cars, ignoring stoplights and engaging in other dangerous activities that put themselves and others using the roads at risk for injury.

Additionally, in most cases, if an automobile driver is involved in an accident with a cyclist, the driver is held responsible regardless of the situation. These claims will have a drastic, negative effect on the driver's insurance rate.

As a city, we need to stand up collectively and make sure that we contact our local government representatives to make sure that these laws get enforced. A poor bicycle rider deserves a ticket as much as a poor car driver.

This is the only way to protect the safety of all citizens who use the roads.  
Harvey Leff, Carroll Gardens

## Send a letter

By e-mail: Letters@BrooklynPaper.com  
By mail: Letters, The Brooklyn Paper, 55 Washington St., Brooklyn, NY 11201.  
All letters must be signed and include the writer's home address and phone number (only the writer's name and neighborhood are published with the letter). Letters may be edited and will not be returned. The earlier in the week you send your letter, the better.

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The Brooklyn Paper's essential guide to the Borough of Kings

December 22, 2007

# Traditions of yore

Rare finds on Christmas menus guarantee a memorable meal

By Bryan Rucker  
for The Brooklyn Paper

December is a stressful month. Building snowmen, roasting chestnuts and opening those Advent calendars can really take a toll on a busy Brooklynite. Yes, tradition says that this is a time for families to gather around the kitchen cooking and listening to Mannheim Steamroller, but who wants to spend Christmas Eve buying bags full of groceries at a supermarket with the population density of Singapore just to remember on the way out that you forgot the egg nog?

Simplify your life and enjoy the holidays in a restaurant. And don't go into Manhattan and end up at some sad Midtown hotel dining room surrounded by homesick tourists. We've looked around and found some restaurants right here in Brooklyn that will make your Christmas memorable. Whether it's the entire feast of the seven fishes offered in Boerum Hill or the anticipation of antelope au poivre in Brooklyn Heights, this borough has what it takes to ensure this holiday is extra special.

## Areo Ristorante

Everyone in your party will be happy ordering a la carte at this 19-year-old Bay Ridge Italian restaurant. Enjoy traditional dishes such as "orecchiette alla pugliese," little ear-shaped pasta prepared with broccoli rabe, sausage, red pepper flakes and garlic, or "vitello alla Milanese," a veal dish doused in breadcrumbs and whipped eggs and



Forget fruitcake: Rosa and Joe Chirico, owners of Marco Polo Ristorante, are two of the borough's restaurateurs welcoming diners on Christmas Eve with festive dishes.

seared in olive oil. Meals are served up in a boisterous, swanky atmosphere.

Owners Rino Aprea and Robert Silverstri said that customers are welcome to try the

seafood salad, a classic Christmas dish in southern Italy.

Extended families and packs of single guys and gals fill out both dining rooms, and

everyone will be in the Christmas spirit. Rino said the place is fully decked out with Christmas lights, but if that's not enough for you, walk over to Dyker Heights to burn off some of that pasta and see some truly over-the-top Christmas light displays.

**Areo** (8424 Third Ave. at 85th Street in Bay Ridge) accepts American Express, Diners Club, Discover, MasterCard and Visa. Entrees: \$14.50-\$22.50. Open noon to 5 pm on Dec. 24, closed Dec. 25. Subway: R to 86th Street. For more information, call (718) 238-0079.

## Henry's End

On Christmas Eve, this 34-year-old Brooklyn Heights neighborhood fixture will be smack in the middle of its annual Wild Game Festival. Although he hasn't set the menu quite yet, chef Mark Lahm could include anything from ostrich to antelope au poivre.

For the non-safari set, he'll also offer duck, fish and even a vegetarian option. But who knows? That free glass of champagne might encourage some culinary adventure.

**Henry's End** (44 Henry St. between Midland and Cranberry streets in Brooklyn Heights) accepts American Express, Diners Club, Discover, MasterCard and Visa. Three-course dinner including champagne: \$60. Open 5:30 pm to 10 pm on Dec. 24, closed Dec. 25. Subway: A, C to High Street or 2, 3 to Clark Street. For more information, call (718) 834-1776 or visit [www.henrysends.com](http://www.henrysends.com).

## Marco Polo Ristorante

While it's closed on Christmas Day, the night before Christmas is the perfect time to dine at Marco Polo. Warm, festive dishes like "fettuccine al vino rosso," or red wine fettuccine tossed tableside in a gigantic wheel of Parmesan cheese, and "costoletta de maiale al cavolfiori," a pork chop sautéed with apples and apple brandy, will fill you with cheer before Santa even begins his descent.

Executive chef Bruno Milone's hearty Italian fare goes perfectly with a glass — or bottle, it is Christmas after all — of red wine, and the restaurant's stunning dining room rivals any tree in town.

**Marco Polo Ristorante** (345 Court St. at Union Street in Carroll Gardens) accepts American Express, Discover, MasterCard and Visa. Entrees: \$14-\$28. Open 1 pm to 9 pm on Dec. 24, closed Dec. 25. Subway: F, G to Carroll Street. For more information, call (718) 852-5015 or visit [www.marcoloristorante.com](http://www.marcoloristorante.com).

## The River Cafe

You'll definitely be dining with a few Manhattanites and tourists at this DUMBO landmark, but don't let that discourage you. See **XMAS** on page 10.

## BREAKING

**B**reak out the expense accounts, because **Morton's The Steakhouse** will open on the ground floor of the Downtown Brooklyn Marriott hotel in late 2008. The 14,500-square-foot lease to "the world's largest operator of company-owned upscale steakhouses" comes as a surprise to fans of the Marriott's Archives restaurant (333 Adams St. at Tillary Street in Downtown Brooklyn), which shares its decor aesthetic with those red metal temples.

But the Brooklyn Marriott's Steve Kunz, director of restaurants, said that his Archives team is hard at work on ways to

## CHEWS

which will be serving up its signature USDA prime-aged, Midwest grain-fed beef, shipped from Chicago — it's expected to have seating for 125 in the main dining room, 100 in its exclusive private boardrooms and 70 in its bar.

While **GO Brooklyn** likes dining out, we do understand that some folks would prefer to stay home, especially if they shelled out for an apartment in one of DUMBO's glitzy apartment towers. So, in a very neighborly move, **Hecho en DUMBO** (111 Front St. at Washington Street in DUMBO) has started delivering its tasty Mexican tapas, including our

favorite, the tiny crab tacos called "picaditas de jaba."

Over in Park Slope, the gourmet grocery trend has been going strong for a while, but this past weekend a new contender, **Union Market** (402 Seventh Ave. at 12th Street in Park Slope), opened its doors. Early buzz is that the selection is great, but the aisles aren't quite wide enough to avoid stroller jams. Shoppers who successfully maneuver the aisles can reward themselves with a pint at suds depot **Beer Table** (427 Seventh Ave. at 14th Street in Park Slope), which recently opened just up the street.

And in the unlikely case that we were to try actually making something — besides reservations, of course — ourselves, now we've got another new option for sundries. In Williamsburg, see **CHEWS** on page 10.

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## SHOPPING

### Give a craft

As stressed-out holiday shoppers mob department stores to find the latest video game system, shoppers looking for a less frantic, more meaningful experience are heading to New York Creates, a craft fair that has taken up residence at the Brooklyn Historical Society.

And while the 30 crafters at the fair don't hawk mp3 players, New York Creates Program Manager Kathy Malone said, "If you can't find what you want, you can always make a custom order."

Artisans like Judith Hooper, whose "kimono boots," pictured, and ceramics helped make her the "2008 Ebay Entrepreneur of the Year," make buying handmade gifts an easy choice; everything from jewelry to fiber arts to glass-blown beadwork is available, and different artists are there each day, so the selection is always changing. The New York Creates Holiday Crafts Fair will take place from noon to 6 pm on Dec. 22 and 23 at the Brooklyn Historical Society (128 Pierrepont St. at Clinton Street in Brooklyn Heights). For information, visit [www.nycreates.com](http://www.nycreates.com). — **Daniel Goldberg**

## GIVING

### Soup star

On Friday, Dec. 14, a date when you might expect to find young movie stars skiing down the slopes in Aspen or frolicking on a beach in San Tropez, Clinton Hill celebrity Adrian Grenier (star of HBO's "Entourage") was ladling out soup at the Neighbors Together Soup Kitchen in Brownsville.

For an hour that afternoon, the actor — currently at work on a film called "Adventures in Power" — served soup to the over 100 people who are relying on the soup kitchen for food this holiday season.

In a statement, the actor said, "It isn't right that millions of families suffer from hunger and worry about getting their next meal. We all need to help in whatever way we can."

For information on how to donate funds, food or time to America's Second Harvest, visit [www.secondharvest.org](http://www.secondharvest.org) or call (312) 641-6668.

## DINING

### French Fulton

What's that delicious aroma and where is it coming from? Morning commuters walking along Fulton Street at Clinton Avenue have been asking just as the smell of "pain au chocolat" wafts through the air.

The scent is coming from **Autour du Monde**, a restaurant recently opened by Olivier Jimenez and his chef-partner Pascal Bettig (pictured) in the space that formerly housed Bodegas. While both have

worked on numerous restaurant openings — they met while working at Park Slope mainstay Belleville — for Jimenez this is the first one that involves his own money.

"It's totally different," he said. "You have to be there all the time — it's like your baby."

The menu is eclectic and boldly international — **Autour du Monde** is French for "around the world" — with elements of French, Spanish, Caribbean and Asian cuisines. Breakfast is about sweets and strong coffee, while sandwiches take the main stage at lunch and each evening different taps will be served in addition to rotisserie chickens.

**Autour du Monde** (860 Fulton St. at Clinton Avenue in Clinton Hill) accepts cash only. Entrees: \$13-\$19. The restaurant serves breakfast and lunch Tuesday through Sunday, and dinner daily. Subway: C to Clinton-Washington. For information, call (718) 598-3500. — **Chris Varnus**

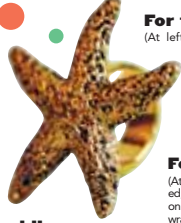
# Last-minute gifts!

Sure-to-please presents for everyone on your list



## For the host & hostess

(At left) Customized gift baskets filled with wines and upscale liquors from all over the world, prices vary. At Mei Chi Liquor, 391 Flatbush Ave. between Sterling Place and St. Johns Place in Prospect Heights, (718) 622-1403.



## For the fashionista

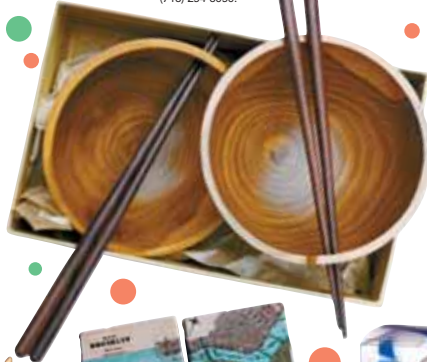
(At left) Moss Mills "Amelia" gold ring, \$110. At Paper Doll Boutique, 104 Bond St. at Pacific Street in Boerum Hill, (718) 237-2236, www.paperdoll-boutique.com.

## For your sweet

(At right) JoMart Chocolates hand-painted, 14-inch tall, 4-pound Santa mounted on decorated foam base encircled with wrapped chocolates, \$90. Call to order. At JoMart Chocolates, 2917 Ave. R at Nostrand Avenue in Marine Park, (718) 375-1277, www.jomartchocolates.com.

## For the worldly decorator

(Below) Teak wood bowl and chopsticks, \$45. At Artesana Home, 155 Montague St. at Clinton Street in Brooklyn Heights, (718) 254-8050.



## For the one you love

(Below) Copper and 24K-gold-threaded Avalok Teshore compassion Buddha statue, \$550. At Mandala Tibetan Store, 59 Seventh Ave. between Lincoln Place and Berkeley Place in Park Slope, (718) 789-7903.



## For the proud Brooklynite

(Above) Screencraft Tileworks Brooklyn coasters, \$38. At Blue Ribbon General Store, 365 State St. at Bond Street in Boerum Hill, (718) 522-9848, www.blue.ribbongeneralstore.com.

## For inspiration

(At right) Fitness training gift certificates. At Absolute Fitness Trainers, (718) 788-3212, www.absolutefitness.com.



## For holiday cheer

(Below) Don Julio "Blanco" tequila holiday package with 750 ml bottle and stainless steel lemon/lime juicer, \$48. Fifth Avenue Liquors, 5611 Fifth Ave. at 56th Street in Sunset Park, (718) 492-0922.



## For the tots

(At right) Melissa & Doug puzzles, \$7-\$10. At Still Hip, 283 Grand Ave. at Clinton Place in Clinton Hill, (718) 398-0008, www.stillhipbrooklyn.com.



## For the marathoner

(At right) Mountain Hardware "Transition" jacket, \$150. At Slope Sports, 70 Seventh Ave. at Lincoln Place in Park Slope, (718) 230-4686, www.slopesports.com.



## For all ages

(Above) "The Alphabet from A to Y with Bonus Letter Z!" by Steve Martin and Roz Chast, \$17.95. Community Bookstore, 143 Seventh Ave. between Garfield and Carroll streets in Park Slope, (718) 783-3075.



## For a new mother

(Above) Bebe Au Lait nursing cover in black eyeliner, white eyeliner or prints, \$37.99. At Boing Boing, 204 Sixth Ave. at Union Street in Park Slope, (718) 398-0251.

— Lisa J. Curtis and Adam Rathe

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**Grocery score:** Last week in Williamsburg, Lodge owner Aaron Woolf opened Urban Rustic, above, a high-end grocery store, deli counter and restaurant featuring a variety of locally sourced products.



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## CHEWS...

Continued from page 7

burg. Lodge owner Aaron Woolf, along with Dan Cipriani and Luis Illades, have just opened **Urban Rustic** (236 N. 12th St. at Union Avenue in Williamsburg), a much-needed shop that stocks locally sourced food and features a deli counter and sit-down dining area.

But delivery is more our style, and it seems that pizza is the hottest dish in Brooklyn Heights. At **Oven** (60 Henry St. at Cranberry Street in Brooklyn Heights), rumor — as well, a press release — has it that local celebs such as Paul Giamatti and Gabriel Byrne are lining up for the gourmet pies. We've had a few memorable meals there ourselves and only hope that all the famous faces don't mean longer waits for us!

As far as making memories goes, nobody does it quite like the **International House of Pancakes**. As a brooding teenager, this GO Brooklynite loved the bottomless pot of

coffee and ruining his appetite for dinner with short stacks of pancakes. Now the flapjack behemoth has opened a new branch at 276 Livingston St., at Bond Street in Downtown Brooklyn. Pass the syrup!


And it isn't just our waistlines that are expanding this season. **Tanoreen Caterers** (7704 Third Ave. at 77th Street in Bay Ridge), the super-popular Middle Eastern eatery, is moving when its lease is up to a nearby space with more space.

Meanwhile, over in Williamsburg, **Peter Luger** (178 Broadway at Driggs Avenue in Williamsburg) just opened a second dining room five years in the making.

And back in DUMBO, **Re-treat** (147 Front St. at Jay Street in DUMBO) has opened "Lowroom," a party space where you can throw a bash and take advantage of owner Jason Stevens' wide variety of liquors and extensive tapas menu.

Got a hot dining tip? Drop us a line at **BreakingChews** at [BrooklynPaper.com](http://BrooklynPaper.com).

with additional reporting by Lisa J. Curtis



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## XMAS...

Continued from page 7

No restaurant in New York can compete with the River Cafe's swoon-worthy views, and the food is just as exquisite.

Christmas Day is the time to go, when chef Brad Steelman offers his four-course feast including such jaw-droppers as foie gras with roasted apple and gingerbread "French toast," and venison with chestnut spaetzle and wild lingonberry sauce.

The River Cafe (1 Water St. at Cadman Plaza West at Fulton Ferry Landing) accepts American Express, Diners Club, MasterCard and Visa. Lunch entrees: \$24-\$39, Christmas Eve three-course dinner prix fixe: \$95, Christmas Day four-course prix fixe: \$125. Open noon to 2 pm on Dec. 24, and 1 pm to 8:30 pm on Dec. 25. Subway: A to High Street or 2, 3 to Clark Street. For more information, call (718) 522-5200 or visit [www.rivercafe.com](http://www.rivercafe.com).

## Saul

The Italian Christmas Eve tradition of "La Vigilia," or the Feast of the Seven Fishes, lives on at this Boerum Hill Michelin one star. Chef Saul Bolton changes his menu every year, but expect a variety of beloved seafood selections including "baccala" (salted codfish), calamari and possibly his famous chowder. Whatever he cooks, this Le Bernardin alum knows his way around a fish.

Dinner service ends at 10:30 pm, so you can run around the corner to St. Agnes in time for midnight mass.

Saul (140 Smith St. between Dean and Bergen streets in Boerum Hill) accepts American Express, Discover, MasterCard and Visa. Feast of the Seven Fishes: \$90. Open 5:30 pm to 10:30 pm on Dec. 24, closed Dec. 25. Subway: F, G to Bergen Street. For more information, call (718) 935-9844 or visit [www.saulrestaurant.com](http://www.saulrestaurant.com).

## CORRECTION

In the "Holiday gift guide" (Dec. 8, 2007), the Web site of The Brooklyn Kitchen was incorrect. The correct address is [www.thebrooklynkitchen.com](http://www.thebrooklynkitchen.com). We regret the error.











# We are the Champ-ions

More champagne corks pop on New Year's Eve than on any other holiday. Whether it's in celebration of the New Year or just in celebration of another glass of fizz, people guzzle the bubbly like it's going out of style. And while it's easy to tell what you like when you're

drinking it, picking out a bottle is a very different story, especially when you're late for the party and are caught between a cheap bottle that nobody wants and a nice one that's out of your price range.

To make everything a bit simpler,

GO Brooklyn enlisted the help of Adam Goldstein and Darin Siegfried, owners of Park Slope's Red, White and Bubbly (211 Fifth Ave. at Union Street, (718) 636-WINE), to explain what you're getting when you buy a bottle of sparkling wine. — Adam Rathe

WINE	PRICE	WHAT IT MEANS	THE EXPERTS SAY
 Ombra Prosecco	\$10.95	Prosecco is a wine made from the white grapes of the Veneto region of Italy.	This isn't classic French champagne, but it's a great, bubbly, fruity alternative.
 Sarda Cava Brut	\$9.99	Cava is a sparkling wine, usually white or pink, from Spain.	A dry, sparkling Spanish wine made from a three-grape blend. A great value, according to Siegfried.
 Henriot Blanc Souverain	\$42.95	This is a true French champagne.	One of the great names of champagne, the company is under new ownership, but still makes traditional champagne. Lush, ripe and creamy, rich with a very long finish.
 LIEB Blanc de Blancs	\$29.95	Blanc de Blancs is a sparkling wine made exclusively from Chardonnay grapes.	A New World sparkling wine inspired by classic champagne. Clean, crisp and focused with excellent acidity.
 Veuve Clicquot Ponsardin Vintage 1999	\$55.49	A vintage champagne made from grapes that were all harvested in one particularly good year.	A textbook example of why vintage champagne is appreciated by connoisseurs. Bigger, richer and fuller flavors than the non-vintage. Made only in the best years.
 Schramsberg Blanc de Blanc	\$34.99	This is a California sparkling white.	More champagne-like than most American sparklers — this is one of our country's best sparkling wines.
 Paul Goerg Rose	\$37.49	Rose is a sweet, pink wine made from pinot noir grapes.	More Paul Goerg is poured at French embassies than at other champagne. It's crisp and bone dry and has a beautiful nose lightly scented with strawberries.
 Taittinger Vintage 1992	\$299.99	Taittinger is a famous French champagne-making family.	A collector's item and a real find. An outstanding champagne from an outstanding year. You'll find bottles at auctions for \$400 — this is a steal.

All photos: The Brooklyn Paper / Robin Lester



Adam Scherster, 26  
Williamsburg  
"To simplify my life and reduce my footprint."



Shawn Schwartz, 37  
Cobble Hill  
"To only listen to music on vinyl."



Jessica Pank, 35  
DUMBO  
"To visit San Francisco and Burma."



Robin Lester, 29  
Clinton Hill  
"To cook more at home."



Dustin Eckstrom, 30  
Park Slope  
"I want to run more."



Laura Sherwood, 23  
Park Slope  
"To actually stick to a resolution!"

## The resolutionary war

Whether it's the buzz from champagne or the mania that comes with the holidays, something compels us all to make promises that we're not likely to keep for the New Year. Some people swear they'll sweat out their toxins in Bikram yoga three times a week, while others vow to play less Sudoku or return their Netflix movies in a timelier manner. GO Brooklyn's Juliana Bunin hit the streets to find out what Brooklynites' New Year's resolutions are.

## BROOKLYN Nightlife

Compiled by Chiara V. Covan

### BAY RIDGE

#### The Salty Dog

7509 Third Ave. at 76th Street in Bay Ridge, (718) 238-9200, www.saltydogbar.com. Fridays, Saturdays: Live DJs, 9 p.m. FREE; Wednesdays: Karaoke night, 9 p.m. FREE.

#### The Wicked Monk

8415 Fifth Ave. at 84th Street in Bay Ridge, (718) 927-0601, www.wickedmonk.com. Dec. 22: My Friend Harvey, 9 p.m. FREE; Dec. 23: Maria & Lisa's Xmas Party with DJ Pz, 9 p.m., \$5; Dec. 27: Hollywood Hangovers, 9 p.m., \$5; Dec. 28: Ninety, 9 p.m., \$5; Dec. 29: Amos, 9 p.m., \$5.

### BEDFORD-STUYVESANT

#### Food 4 Thought

4465 Marcus Garvey Blvd. at MacDonough Street in Bedford-Stuyvesant, (718) 443-4160.

Fridays: Open mic, 9 p.m., \$5; Tuesdays: Philosophical Pub Tandem, an open discussion, 8 p.m. donation suggested; Wednesdays: Game night (Cash Flow), 7 p.m. FREE; Fridays: Zodiac Lounge, 7 p.m. FREE.

#### Sista's Place

456 Nostrand Ave. at Jefferson Avenue in Bedford-Stuyvesant, (718) 398-1746, www.sistasplace.com.

Dec. 22: Kwanza Celebration with Abba Kwanza, 9 p.m., 10:30 p.m., \$20.

### BOERUM HILL

#### Hank's Saloon

46 Third Ave. at Atlantic Avenue in Boerum Hill, (718) 625-4003, www.extensive.com/hankssaloon.

Sundays: Sean Yenker and the New Jack Ramblers, 10 p.m. FREE; Mondays: Live band kumby karate, 10 p.m. FREE; Wednesdays: Live band "Rockstar Karaoke," 9:30 p.m. FREE; Dec. 22: Christmas Eve celebration Party featuring The Dirty Rogues and guests, 10 p.m. FREE; Dec. 23: 5-house Lites, 10 p.m. FREE; Dec. 27: Jon Bitt and more, 10 p.m. FREE; Dec. 28: Susannah Tool & De Co., Johnny Carlesimo and The Rolling First, Ava Brown and the Ohio Valley Boys, 8 p.m., 10 p.m., FREE.

### BRIGHTON BEACH

#### National Restaurant

273 Brighton Beach Ave. at Brighton Second Street in Brighton Beach, (718) 446-1225, www.national.com.

Saturdays: Live Russian music and dance show, 9 p.m. FREE (with \$50 pre-fun dinner); Fridays: Live Russian music and dance show, 9 p.m. FREE (with \$50 pre-fun dinner); Sundays: Live Russian music and dance show, 9 p.m. FREE (with \$50 pre-fun dinner).

### BROOKLYN HEIGHTS

#### Magnetic Field

97 Atlantic Ave. at Henry Street in Brooklyn Heights, (718) 834-0269, www.magneticfield.com.

Dec. 22: Live band karate, 8 p.m. FREE; Dec. 27: The Suburban Cold Hearted Sing-a-long night, 8 p.m., \$7; Dec. 29: The Shallows, The Hall Monitors, 8 p.m., \$7.

### CLINTON HILL

#### Five Spot Restaurant

459 Myrtle Ave. at Washington Avenue in Clinton Hill, (718) 852-0200, www.fivespotrestaurant.com.

Saturday DJ Ali, 6 p.m. FREE; Mondays: RPN-Open Tumbler hosted by DJ Copas (bring your own needles and vinyl), 8 p.m. FREE; Tuesdays: Five for Funny Tumbler hosted by Dave Lester, 10 p.m., \$5; Wednesdays: Open mic with Nate Jones

and Da Feel, 9 p.m., \$5 (10 after 10 p.m.); Dec. 22: DJ Kenny Parker (legendary DJ for R&B), Midnight, \$5; Dec. 29: DJ Kenny Parker, Midnight, \$5.

#### Grand Dank Cafe

285 Grand Ave. at Lafayette Avenue in Clinton Hill, (718) 940-0900, www.granddank.com.

Saturdays: Rhonda Bernet (funk, jazz, soul, R&B, old school), 8 p.m. FREE; Sundays: Live reggae music, 7 p.m. FREE; Tuesdays: Don Juaner (Brazilian music), 8:30 p.m. FREE; Thursdays: DJ Afro-Freaky, 8 p.m. FREE; Fridays: Live music, 10 p.m. FREE.

### DUMBO

#### Five Front

5 Front St. at Old Fulton Street in DUMBO, (718) 626-5559, www.fivefrontrestaurant.com.

Fridays: Live music, 8 p.m. FREE.

### FLATBUSH

#### Vox Pop

1022 Corleone Ave. at Stratford Road in Flatbush, (718) 940-2084, www.voxpopnet.net.

Sundays: Open mic, 7 p.m. FREE with two-drink-and-a-dinner minimum; Dec. 22: Rupert Waters Group, 9 p.m. FREE; Dec. 28: "2007 Ain't Dead Yet: Live Karaoke" a hip-hop party featuring Tak Phum Duh Bush, Cee Rock The Fly, Chaka Cornfield, Capone, Cooie High, Radical, Firefly, Steepwalkers and DJ Polarity, 7:30 p.m. FREE.

### FORT GREENE

#### BAM Cafe

30 Lafayette Ave. at Ashland Place in Fort Greene, (718) 638-4100, www.bam.com.

Dec. 22: Jeremiah, 9 p.m. FREE; Dec. 28: Dawn Drake, 9 p.m. FREE; Dec. 29: Leña Francis and Anthony Dion, 9 p.m. FREE.

### Night of the Cookers

767 Fulton St. at South Portland Avenue in Fort Greene, (718) 770-1197.

Sundays: Live jazz, 10 p.m. FREE; Thursdays: Live jazz, 8 p.m. FREE; Fridays: Live jazz, 10 p.m. FREE.

### GOWANUS

#### Issue Project Room

122 Third Ave. at Third Avenue in Gowanus, (718) 330-0313, www.issueprojectroom.com.

Dec. 22: Amy Kohn and Black Anor Productions "The Life of Orlans," 8 p.m., \$10; Open mic night, 8 p.m. FREE; Thursdays: "80s Disco," 9 p.m. FREE; Fridays: "80s Disco," 9 p.m. FREE; Saturdays: "80s Disco," 9 p.m. FREE.

### GREENPOINT

#### Club Europa

61 Riverside Ave. at Manhattan Avenue in Greenpoint, (718) 383-5723, www.club.europa.com.

Saturdays: VJ dance party, 10 p.m. FREE before 10 p.m., \$15 after 10:30 p.m.; Tuesdays: Karaoke night, 8 p.m. FREE; Fridays: Sexy progressive dance party, 10 p.m. FREE; Saturdays: Live music, 10 p.m. FREE; Dec. 22: Unleash featuring Neutronix, Out of the Machine, The Newborders, 7 p.m., \$10; Dec. 29: Clockmaker with Blue Control, 7 p.m., \$10.

### CLUB EXIT

147 Greenpoint Ave. at Manhattan Avenue in Greenpoint, (718) 389-4969, www.club-exit.com.

Saturdays: DJ dance party, 10 p.m., \$15 (before 10 p.m.); Dec. 22: Live music, 10 p.m., \$15 (before 10 p.m.); Dec. 27: Live music, 10 p.m., \$15 (before 10 p.m.); Dec. 29: Live music, 10 p.m., \$15 (before 10 p.m.); Dec. 30: Live music, 10 p.m., \$15 (before 10 p.m.).

### GREENWOOD HEIGHTS

#### Kitchen Bar

687 Sixth Ave. at 20th Street in



and Da Feel, 9 p.m., \$5 (10 after 10 p.m.); Dec. 22: DJ Kenny Parker (legendary DJ for R&B), Midnight, \$5; Dec. 29: DJ Kenny Parker, Midnight, \$5.

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### GREENWOOD HEIGHTS

#### Kitchen Bar

687 Sixth Ave. at 20th Street in

Adi Foa-Rosen, Ali Fohman-Cohen and special guests, 8 p.m., \$10; Dec. 23: "It's Another Russian Affair" with Interiors, Goodman and Alex Kopyt, 8 p.m. STBD; Dec. 24: Jewellie 5 with JDub Records featuring a screening of Hot War American Summer with free Chinese food and DJ Rhea on the wheels, 10 p.m. in advance, \$15 day of the show; Dec. 27: John Brown's Body, Giant Panda Guerilla Dub Squad, 9 p.m., \$15 in advance, \$15 day of the show; Dec. 28: Dec. 28: Maimai Paragraph, A Stillwater Satellite, Plaza Toros, Chelavito, Magdalene, 8 p.m., \$10; Dec. 29: Cold Hard, Wild Things, The Scene, The First Thing, Greg Smith & The Broken English, 8 p.m., STBD.

### Tea Lounge

837 Union St. at Seventh Avenue in Park Slope, (718) 789-2762, www.tealounge.com.

Dec. 28: Garden Gnomes, 8 p.m., \$5 suggested donation.

### Two Boots Brooklyn

214 Second Ave. at Seventh Avenue in Park Slope, (718) 499-3253, www.twobootsbklyn.com.

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### Union Hall

1022 Corleone Ave. at Stratford Road in Flatbush, (718) 940-2084, www.unionhall.com.

Dec. 27: Luke Rathbone, Action Set, Mystery of Two, 8 p.m., \$7; Dec. 28: Wednesday's End of the Year Holiday Show featuring Creamy Steevens, Ciggy Jefferson, Nancy Sinatra, Johnny Froland and more, 10 p.m., \$8; Dec. 29: A fundraiser for Bobbi Mann with The Forms, Graham Smith and more, 8 p.m., \$10.

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Dec. 22: Smiley's Western Roundup, 9 p.m., \$8; Dec. 28: Brandon Ross "Theorems," 9 p.m., Rob Reddy Group, 10:30 p.m., \$10.

### Rocky Sullivan's

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### Trash Bar

256 Grand St. at Orger Avenue in Williamsburg, (718) 599-1020, www.trashbar.com.





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# AREN'T

## Hepcat can't wait for 30th reunion

Just the other day Hepcat received an invitation to his 30th college reunion. It left him feeling mighty old, but you can bet that Hepcat wants to be at Bard College to celebrate that milestone.

"The Hudson Valley in spring? What's not to like?" Hepcat said nostalgically when Smartmom asked if he plans to attend.

Still, it's hard to believe that Hepcat is old enough to have been out of college for 30 years.

Smartmom should thank this June, it will be 28 years since the day the great L.F. Stone, that iconoclastic journalist and critic of the Cold War, McCarthyism, and the Vietnam War, spoke to her class of 1980 at SUNY Binghamton.

She can't remember a word he said, but she does remember that his commencement speech was quite long and characteristically controversial, as it elicited boos from some parents in the audience. Their reaction disgusted and embarrassed her.

Smartmom isn't sure whether she will be attending her 30th reunion in 2010. She keeps in touch with most of the college friends she wants to be in touch with.

Still, it would be interesting to see how the campus has changed and to say hello to some of her professors (if they're still there), to have a cup of coffee at the Argo coffee shop and to visit the Salvation Army on the south side of town.

One thing's for sure: Smartmom never wants to fill out one of those "So, what have you been doing since graduation?" questionnaires.

Smartmom thinks that those kinds of questionnaires are such a horrendous exercise in personal reductionism.

A friend of Smartmom's actually decided not to attend an important college reunion recently because she took one look at the questionnaire and knew that she was incapable of filling it out.

"I'm having a mid-life crisis," she told Smartmom. "I wasn't going to sit there and do it."

Those kinds of reunion questionnaires invite boast-

### SMART mom

By Louise Crawford

ing — about your career, your children and all your creature comforts. People feel like they're really got to impress all those people they went to college with.

So what has Smartmom been doing since that day in the Broome County Arena? What fabulous resume can she whip out to impress her peers, what personal biographical detail will just wow them all...

Hmmmm. Well, obviously, how does one honestly characterize more than a quarter-century of one's life? Is it all really just a list of degrees, courses, jobs, projects, addresses, and names?

Are we nothing more than our resumes? What about the interesting life — the life that goes on between the lines of all the other stuff? The little discoveries we make about ourselves, the conversations we have with our friends and family on the phone, the surprising moments we have with our children on the way to the store, an inside joke told over and over; the words of a wise therapist; getting proposed to at Two Boots Restaurant on Avenue A; an epiphany walk across the Brooklyn Bridge; stopping at the National Poetry Museum while driving through Kansas; hearing Cateen Veloso at Lincoln Center and Patti Smith at CBGB; a memorable meal in a small Tuscan town or at Al Di La; Teen Spirit and the Oh So Feisty One's birth and their first words; OSHO practicing the poem, or Teen Spirit's show last October at the Bowers Poetry Club; the day

convinces we make about ourselves; the conversations we have with our friends and family on the phone, the surprising moments we have with our children on the way to the store, an inside joke told over and over; the words of a wise therapist; getting proposed to at Two Boots Restaurant on Avenue A; an epiphany walk across the Brooklyn Bridge; stopping at the National Poetry Museum while driving through Kansas; hearing Cateen Veloso at Lincoln Center and Patti Smith at CBGB; a memorable meal in a small Tuscan town or at Al Di La; Teen Spirit and the Oh So Feisty One's birth and their first words; OSHO practicing the poem, or Teen Spirit's show last October at the Bowers Poetry Club; the day

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Hepcat made lakes (or the day he danced out the basement). What of the life we live currently to the resume life? The life of our hearts, our minds? Our sensations? Our love and our pain?

Hepcat is actually looking forward to his 30th graduation. And he's not afraid of those stupid questionnaires.

"Not intimidated?" If someone asks me what I've been doing for the last 30 years, I'll just say, "Funny you should ask..."

Louise Crawford also writes "Only the Blog Knows Brooklyn" and is keeper of the Park Slope 100, that handy list of local celebrity.

### CHECKIN' IN WITH...

## Libba Bray

Teen Lit Queen

Fans of best-selling teen fiction author Libba Bray have been waiting too long for the release of *The Sweet Far Thing*, the final novel in Bray's *Gemma Doyle* trilogy. This latest book — like its predecessors, *A Great and Terrible Beauty* and *Rebel Angels* — is set in a Victorian finishing school and oozes with classic Gothic themes yet also gives the genre a good shakeup with its rebellious debutante who meets the forces of darkness head on. Everyone in Park Slope knows Bray — or should, given that she writes virtually everything while sitting on the second couch at the Tea Lounge on Seventh Avenue. That's where she checked in with Sylvie Meyerson this week to discuss her new book (which will be out on Dec. 27) and her forthcoming projects.

**SYLVIE MEYERSON:** So, we have the final installment in the *Gemma Doyle* trilogy.

**LIBBA BRAY:** *Waves* arms in the air! Huzzah!

**SM:** Could you reveal a few tantalizing tidbits? We're all dying here.

**LB:** I'm telling you: Victorian glam rock opera with beats.

**SM:** Who wears the platform? The beastes?

**LB:** They ALL wear the platforms, baby!

**SM:** Does it get really steamy?

**LB:** The book, in some ways, is a metaphor for that emerging female sexuality and how frightening and delicious that is to discover that sort of power. The great thing about the Victorians is that everything is so repressed and so sensual. It's great to be able to play with that kind of imagery and atmosphere, but things go a little further this time around. There's more steam.

**SM:** What's the hardest thing about writing the final novel in a trilogy?

**LB:** Was there anything that wasn't hard? [Laughs] The hardest part was what I call the math of it. Things all have to add up and so everything you've put in there needs to pay off.

**SM:** *Gemma Doyle* was a 21st-century girl, what kind of a band would she be in?

**LB:** It's funny because I can think of exactly who Felicity would be. Felicity would be Bowie. I did listen to a ton of Bowie while I was writing, like "Space Oddity," "Moonage Daydream," the really early stuff.

**SM:** So what would Gemma be listening to?

**LB:** I think she'd listen to the Runaways. I think she'd listen to Bowie. I think she'd listen to punk. Of course, I'm listing all the things I listen to. Hmm, I think maybe she'd be a Souisane and the Bananabee kind of girl. Big on the eyeliner and dark lyrics. A little "Cities in Dust." Yeah, definitely Souisane Sioux.

**SM:** You have another novel in the works for 2009. Could you tell us a little bit about "Going Bovine"?

**LB:** It's a sort of absurdist, dark comedy about a 16-year-old sickle kid with mad cow disease. "It's the feel-good mad cow disease book of the summer?" Or something like that. But "Going Bovine" is really about those moments in life where we question everything and no longer see/feel/experience our reality in the same way (which is what a lot of adolescence feels like), and whether or not you have to let go of this reality in order to gain clarity. Which is where the String Theory business comes in. Black holes. Viking yard games. Death-obsessed dwarves. True love and magic hardware stores. Disneyworld. Yeah, good times, good times. Should be fun to work on, although I'm pretty much over hamburgers now.

Libba Bray's *The Sweet Far Thing* (Delacorte Books for Young Readers) will be in bookstores everywhere on Dec. 26.

ing for the last 30 years, I'll just say, "Funny you should ask..."

Louise Crawford also writes "Only the Blog Knows Brooklyn" and is keeper of the Park Slope 100, that handy list of local celebrity.

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## O'Hara gets his close up

By Dana Rubinstein

The Brooklyn Paper

A local writer has cast District Attorney Charles Hynes as the villain in a new movie about an unlikely big-screen hero: "O'Hara." The title character is none other than political gadfly John O'Hara, a longtime opponent of the Brooklyn Democratic machine (that kind of thing happens when the DA busts you for voting in the wrong polling place — but more on that later).

John O'Hara's life story on the big screen? It may seem far-fetched, but this is no film school production.

O'Hara and screenwriter Christopher Ketchum, a freelance journalist, have managed to line up some big-name backers.

Holt McCallany, who appeared in the movies "Panic Room" and "Three Kings," and plays Ricky on TV's "Heroes," has agreed to co-write the script with Ketchum, and then to direct it.

McCallany, meanwhile, enlisted director Nick Cassavetes, with whom he worked on the HBO film "Alpha Dog," as a producer. Cassavetes is busy shooting "My Sister's Keeper," a New Line film starring Cameron Diaz, but his assistant, Frank Peluso, confirmed that Cassavetes "is a producer on the project."

Even better, Chris North (you know, Mr. Big from "Sex & the City") is also an old pal of O'Hara's and is considering taking the role of Hynes.

"This is going to be a really high-profile project," said McCallany. "It will attract a lot of attention to this story."

And what's the story?

Well, the film, which flows closely to real-life (though alleged) events, centers on former Civil Court judge John Phillips, whom Hynes's office had declared mentally incompetent in 2001 — shortly after he announced that he would run against the long-serving DA. That declaration set into motion the plundering of Phillips's substantial real-estate portfolio by court-appointed guardians.

O'Hara sprang to Phillips's aid. He didn't have much to lose, after all. In 1997, Hynes prosecuted him for voting from his girlfriend's Sunset Park address (14 blocks from his home). O'Hara, who was a practicing attorney, was subsequently debarred. It is believed to be the only time a person has been successfully prosecuted for voting in the wrong election district.

"It's a pretty tragic tale," said McCallany. "It's the kind of malicious skull-and-gears that you would expect to see in Russia." And it's also the sort of tale that lends itself to the cinema.

"It's just the intersection of these rebels in an attempt to topple the corrupt power, the machine," said Ketchum. "It's like 'Prince of the City' meets 'Serpico' meets 'City Hall.' My wife just added 'Pee Wee's Playhouse.' I don't know what she's talking about."

"[And] O'Hara's a great character," added Ketchum. "He's a man who decided not to stand down before the powers that be. In doing so, he ended up basically losing everything. He's a very American character, the rebel, the David versus Goliath."

Phillips, rebuffed by phone at his Park Slope nursing home, said, "Everybody's got a little story in their lives that would make it into a movie."

Hynes, for his part, declined to comment on his upcoming turn as villain in a big-screen picture, though Ketchum speculated that "the certainty won't be pleased."

"On the other hand, when you conduct yourself in the manner he has over the years [with Phillips and O'Hara], you can expect yourself to be portrayed as a villain in movies," he added.

The movie has a budget of \$6 million, according to McCallany, and should begin production sometime this summer.

## XMAS...

Continued from page 12

by an act of Congress," she said in a statement. "The spirit of the holiday season... has taught me to accept the values expressed by a diverse civil society. It is the love for our collective humanity; the desire to live in a world filled with peace and joy that truly defines and unites us as Americans."

She ended her statement with her holiday resolution of her own that would no doubt pass unanimously: "Happy holidays and a healthy, prosperous New Year to all."

Clarke's objection to the Christmas resolution is somewhat surprising, given how such resolutions typically pass with overwhelming support — including the support of Rep. Yvette Clarke in most cases.

Earlier this year, Clarke, for example, voted for House Resolution 635 (which, as you all know, expressed "respect to Muslims in the United States and throughout the world" on the eve of Ramadan) and House Resolution 747 (which recognized "the religious and historical significance of the festival of Diwali," an Indian holiday).

Her spokeswoman, Chic Smith, explained the Diwali vote.

"Christmas is widely recognized around the world, so this resolution was not necessary," Smith said. "Diwali is a holiday that deserves to be more widely known."

The symbolic resolution's sponsor, Rep. Steve King (R-Iowa), said he was moved to act because of "an anti-Christian bias" in the nation.

He blamed the American Civil Liberties Union for enacting the resolution. "They wish [people] 'Happy holidays,' but not 'Merry Christmas' because they might be offended," he added.

"I would not have thought that five or 10 years ago that we'd need to make a statement" affirming the importance of Christmas and Christianity, King concluded.

On that point, King might be right. The last time Congress passed a symbolic, pro-Christmas resolution, on Dec. 15, 2005, the wording was far less heated than King's resolution.

That bill avoided making any claims about America's Christian heritage, but specifically put the Congress on record as supporting "the importance of the symbols and traditions of Christmas," disavowing of "attempts to ban reference to Christmas," and tipping its hat to "those who celebrate Christmas."

It's not the first time Clarke has taken an unpopular stand against her congressional colleagues. Earlier this year, she was the only "no" vote on a proposal to name the library on Ellis Island after the British-born comedian Bob Hope. The bill was approved 420-1.

This time around, Clarke had company in dissent. The other eight opponents were Reps. Gary Ackerman (D-Queens); Barbara Lee, Pete Stark and Lynn Woolsey (D-California); Diana DeGette (D-Colorado); Alice Hastings (D-Florida); Jim McDermott (D-Washington); and Bobby Scott (D-Virginia).



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The NYC Department of Buildings is seeking a construction professional with vast knowledge of construction costs to serve as a Fee Estimator. The selected candidate will estimate construction costs to ensure appropriate filing fees are paid in accordance with the NYC Building Code. Applicants must have a minimum of 7 years experience in general construction estimating and a HS diploma or equivalent. Full benefits, including NYC pension plan, paid holidays and more.

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## NEW BUILDINGS

### Department of Buildings

#### CONSTRUCTION FEE ESTIMATOR

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The Brooklyn Paper

## LEGAL NOTICES

Notice is hereby given that an Order entered by the Civil Court, Kings County on the 7th day of November, 2007, bearing Index Number N501032/2007, a copy of which may be examined at the Office of the Clerk, located at CIVIL COURT, KINGS COUNTY, 141 Livingston Street, Brooklyn, New York 11201, in room 007, grants me the right to assume the name of Christine Hoang Nguyen. My present name is Hoang Ngoc Dung Nguyen, a/k/a Christine Hoang Nguyen, a/k/a Dung Hoang Ngoc Christine Nguyen, a/k/a Christine Nguyen. My present address is 2918 Brighton Seventh St., Brooklyn, NY 11225. My place of birth is Saigon, Vietnam. My date of birth is September 12, 1988.

Notice is hereby given that an Order entered by the Civil Court, Kings County on the 12th day of November, 2007, bearing Index Number N501049/2007, a copy of which may be examined at the Office of the Clerk, located at CIVIL COURT, KINGS COUNTY, 141 Livingston Street, Brooklyn, New York 11201, in room 007, grants me the right to assume the name of Maria Jimenez. My present name is Maria Rodriguez. My present address is 440 Berry Street #3H, Brooklyn, NY 11211. My place of birth is San Sebastian, Puerto Rico. My date of birth is December 24, 1945.







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